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# EXCURSIONS IN NORMANDY,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

CHARACTER, MANNERS, CUSTOMS,  
AND TRADITIONS OF THE PEOPLE;

OF THE

STATE OF SOCIETY IN GENERAL;

AND OF THE

HISTORY, ARTS, SCIENCES, COMMERCE, MANUFACTURES,  
ANTIQUITIES, SCENERY, &c.

OF

THAT INTERESTING PROVINCE OF FRANCE.

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EDITED FROM THE

JOURNAL OF A RECENT TRAVELLER

BY

FREDERIC SHOBERL, ESQ.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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1841.

654.



valuable to the professor of the law, on the judicial institutions of the ancient Normans, in which some of our own seem to have originated—if, however, they were not both derived from the same German source and existing contemporaneously in Normandy and in England, anterior to the Conquest.

FREDERIC SHOBERL.

London, Aug. 20, 1841.

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**THE FIRST VOLUME.**

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I

# EXCURSIONS

IN

## NORMANDY.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

Normandy in general—The ancient Normans of German extraction—Affinity of the Character of the modern Normans to that of the Germans—Normandy the richest Province of France in Natural Productions—Sketch of the History of the Normans and of Normandy—Influence of the Germanic principle.

For four years—I have often been obliged to calculate, in order to convince myself that it was only four years, and not thrice as many—I had not ~~seen~~ my native country : fate, chance, my good or my ill luck, had confined me in the capital of France. How different did every thing there appear to me ! Both Nature and people continued to be strange, strongly as they interested me, and desirous as I was to familiarize myself with them. I heard what they said, I understood the words, but their essence was foreign



to me. When I found myself too uncomfortable in the great city, I fled from it, to ease my heart amidst the scenery of free Nature. But Nature always seemed as cold and as calculating as the people, and I suspected a reaction between them, which at once shocked and cheered me.

The idea of a reaction between men and Nature, which had often occurred to me in the environs of Paris, was far more strongly impressed upon me here in Normandy. The ancient Normans were of German extraction, and much German blood still flows in the veins of the Normans of the present day. But the land is pure German. In the towns every step reminds you of Germany; while, in the country, every tree and every hedge smile on the native of Germany as old acquaintances, and greet him with welcome in his mother-tongue. You might place Nürnberg or Cologne on the spot where Rouen stands, or Nürnberg close to Rouen, and turn out of the last street of Nürnberg into the first of Rouen without observing that you had just quitted a German and entered a French city.

The Norman retains to this day the principal features of the German character. He is kind-hearted, energetic, industrious, and brave; and, in addition to these qualities, which are met with often enough among other Frenchmen, he is distinguished from them by his perseverance. The Frenchman is easily excited either to good or to evil, and, owing precisely to this susceptibility, he is fickle. The Norman adheres stedfastly to the resolution he has once formed,

and labours quietly on till he has accomplished his object. No inhabitant of a French province, excepting, perhaps, the Alsatian, is so attached to his native country as the Norman. He is liable to home-sickness, not in the same degree indeed as the Swiss or the South German, but much like the North German; and his heart throbs violently whenever he hears the well-known air, *La Normandie*. He adheres more tenaciously than almost any other Frenchman to subsisting institutions and to ancient customs. Like the Swabian, he talked for centuries about the good old right; and most of the governments of France, how absolute soever they might be, found themselves obliged to recognize this good old right, at least in appearance; and, with this appearance, the Norman was in general satisfied, herein exhibiting another proof of his origin.

The same contrast between love of home and fondness for travel which appears in the German character is found also in the Norman, and, like the German of whatever tribe, he too is an adventurer. For almost all the discoveries which the French have made in foreign parts, they are indebted to this quality of the Normans, whose *sea-wolves* of old, the terror of all merchant-men and even of ships of war, ploughed every sea, as the vessels of their descendants still do at the present day. Lastly, one might say quite as justly, *querelle normande*, as *querelle allemande*, for the Norman has the character of taking a real delight in lawsuits. I know a man at Rouen who commenced a lawsuit with his nephew, his only



heir, on account of some informality in a contract, which the nephew offered to cancel and to replace with another, a proposal to which the uncle, however, refused to assent, that he might not let slip the fair opportunity of at last gaining one lawsuit after losing a great many. Instances of this kind are frequently occurring; hence the lawyers in Normandy are a very thriving class, and, in spite of the revolution and its innovations, they always find their kitchen, cellar, pig-sty, and poultry-yard abundantly supplied at the expence of their clients.

As the Norman is nearly related to the German, so is Normandy to Germany. The towns are distinguished, like most of the old German, by their gothic churches and town-halls, narrow streets, and large, lofty, dark houses, with small, narrow, windows. In their dwellings, the outside was to them, as to the ancient Germans, a secondary consideration, and the interior the main point: so the windows were but large enough to admit sufficient light for the inmates to see what they were about, they were quite satisfied. In the country you see, as in Germany and England, a great number of detached farm-houses, with a wall or fence surrounding the yard and garden, and many of these and their outbuildings are thatched with straw. Around them lie the most thriving fields in all France; and Norman industry and perseverance, with the aid of laws, in the spirit of ancient Germany, protecting liberty and independence, have created here in France an oasis that is a paradise of fertility and plenty.

Normandy is the richest province in France. Agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, stand on a higher step than in almost any other country in Europe, at least of the like extent. The superficies of the province amounts to about one seventeenth of all France, and the territorial revenues amounted in 1833 to 176,200,000 francs, about one ninth of all the territorial revenues of France, so that the soil here produces nearly twice as much as in the other parts of the kingdom. The produce of a hectare is, upon the average of all France, 28 fr. 55 cent.; of Normandy, 53 fr. 69 cent. In the department of Lower Seine this produce is, for arable land, 100 fr., for vineyards, 112 fr., for meadows, 84 fr., for woods, 108 fr. Normandy grows annually about 5,600,000 hectolitres of wheat, 1,316,000 hect. of rye and mangcorn, 1,731,000 hect. of buckwheat, 1,475,000 hect. of barley, 2,668,000 hect. of oats, 414,700 hect. of potatoes. In regard to cattle, it is equally flourishing: 89,340 bullocks, 9,144 draught oxen, 302,797 cows, 54,673 heifers, and 311,041 horses (in 1816), afford proof of this. Normandy produces annually 2,300,000 kilogrammes of wool, of which about 60,000 kil. are merino wool, and 540,000 kil. from a cross of the merino. A single arrondissement in the department of Lower Seine, that of Neuchatel, makes 1,621,921 hect. of cider and perry. In regard to trade and industry, Normandy is, in like manner, the most flourishing portion of France. Havre is its first commercial town; Rouen, Elbeuf, Bolbec, are celebrated for their manufactures.

The industry and the perseverance of the inhabitants of Normandy are indisputably in a great measure the source of this flourishing state of the province ; but it is not to be denied that the institutions which the Normans transplanted hither have contributed largely to this state of things, and that in reality they are the main cause of it.

For some centuries the Normans were the terror of all Europe, and, a thousand years ago, their name, wherever they passed, was not uttered without a shudder, for they were terrible in war, and as conquerors their treatment of the vanquished was frequently most cruel. But wherever they came and remained long enough to be able to sow, there they deposited in the ground a seed which produced golden fruit, and the name of this seed was—liberty. Victors and vanquished reaped the fair fruit which it yielded. Charlemagne, in his time, saw in spirit that these bold sons of the North were too impetuous, too free, too strong, for his degenerate Franks ; and when he beheld their sails in the harbour of Mague-lone, the obdurate conqueror of the Moors and the Saxons shed tears which became a bloody prophecy for his subjects. But these tears involved the severest condemnation of himself ; and who knows whether he might not have wept rather for his own sake than over the future calamities of his people ! Indeed but for the endless wars of Charlemagne, but for his ambition, which consumed the energies of his subjects as rust consumes steel, which compelled them to purchase their liberty in order to support life, and

which uselessly sacrificed the rest of the free men on the field of battle, the Normans never would have been able so to overpower the Franks as they did after Charles's death. There is something singular about great men in history : most of them are rather the spoiled children of the past, which has prepared every thing for them, than the strong fathers of a futurity created by themselves. If the efforts of Charlemagne had any definite purpose, we must assume the intention to force the German tribes to a unity, to found an undivided Germany, as the legatees of Rome. But those who cheaply attribute to him this object little heed that Charles himself contradicts them, inasmuch as he divided this united Germany among his sons. But, if this were not his design, what could it be? History has been asked this question for a thousand years past, without giving any answer ; for she merely tells us that he annihilated the institutions of Germany, since he superseded the people in the courts of justice by appointed judges, since he broke their strength, and forced them to buy themselves and their freedom ; that, finally, he fought many battles, subdued many nations, and was a great commander and sovereign.

His successors were not in a condition to oppose the incursions of the Normans, for they were quarrelling among themselves about the *one* vast empire which he had left, and found a people whose last energies the great emperor had wasted. A few thousand Normans were now sufficient to penetrate into the heart of the empire of the Franks, and to

overthrow all that opposed them ; for they were brave, as were the Franks before Charles's time, and they were free, which the latter no longer were, and, in the feeling of their freedom, they were proud, bold, mighty, invincible. In the year 876, Rollo reduced Rouen ; hence he made incursions into France with his victorious followers ; and Rollo, the bold, savage Norman, the leader of those ruthless bands, of which all contemporary chroniclers speak almost as of wild beasts, pestilence, and famine, became the legislator of his people ; and these laws of a barbarian were the cause of the rapid improvement of the country, and the germ of its subsequent prosperity. His laws attest that he valued his Normans, their freedom, and their independence, as highly as they did themselves. According to them, every disturber of the public peace was to be banished, and the severest punishment was awarded to theft. The efficacy of this rigour, or rather the honest disposition of the people, is attested by an anecdote which history has preserved. Fatigued by the chase, Rollo lay down in the wood of Roumare to rest himself. He hung his valuable bracelet upon a tree, and, when he went away, forgot to take it with him ; so there it hung, untouched, for three years, not a creature who passed that way venturing to appropriate it to himself.

After Rollo had made peace with the king of the Franks, he convoked his states to consult with them about the welfare of the country. The assembly consisted of the bishops and barons, the mayors



and sheriffs of the towns, the chiefs of the hundreds and tithings, and of many other discreet men (*saiges hommes*). These were the representatives of the clergy, the nobility, the townsmen, and the country people, consequently of the whole population. In France at that time there was no longer a people, for Charlemagne, and still more the kings, his successors, had totally excluded it from public life; and it was not till four hundred years afterwards, in the fourteenth century, that Philip the Fair summoned for the first time the *tiers-état* to the assemblies of the states-general. As Rollo provided for a due representation of the people, or rather, as the Germanic principle, the usage and custom of the Normans, obliged him to do this, so they likewise obliged him to provide for the due administration of justice. The *Echiquier* of Normandy, a sort of jury court, was the supreme court of justice, which sat sometimes at Rouen, at others at Caen, Bayeux, or Falaise, and protected the people from injustice.

The consequences of these institutions very soon manifested themselves; and, while the most dreadful famine frequently prevailed in the rest of France, while the people there were as wretched as possible, Normandy, already under the second duke, William Longsword, attained a prosperity which even the everlasting wars with the French were not capable of annihilating.

All the dukes upon the whole respected the original institutions which they brought with them

from their mother country, though there may be instances enough in which they contrived to evade them in particulars. Even the bold Robert, for whom the terror diffused by his sword, perhaps a joke made by himself on his death-bed,\* acquired the surname of the Devil, who, in scorn of the nobility, made Harlotte, the daughter of a tanner of Falaise, his wife, and mother of William the Conqueror, bowed to the laws of his ancestors. And the same William the Conqueror, in whose veins were mingled princely and plebeian blood, as were pride and energy in his heart; who defied fate and its hints, when it detained him by storms in Fecamp, and when, on landing from his ship, he chanced to fall on the shore of England; who kept the abbots and prelates within their proper bounds, curbed the nobility by a God's peace, and the people by fixing an hour at which every one should return to his home—even William respected those laws, and did not venture upon his expedition to England, till he had consulted the nobility, the clergy, and the third estate.

An anecdote, which history has transmitted to us, shows that the people themselves had not lost the remembrance of their rights, and that they had the spirit to assert them, even in opposition to the sovereign. William, the conqueror of England, was

\* Returning from Palestine, he fell ill by the way, and by his command was carried on a bier by four blacks. A Norman, who fell in with him thus attended, asked if he had any message to send to his dominions. "Say," replied Robert, "that thou hast seen me carried to Paradise by four devils."

dead, and was to be buried in Caen. But when his body was set down beside the grave prepared for it, the *Horro*, the ancient cry of the Normans, was heard to proceed from amidst the crowd assembled on the occasion. A plain citizen of Caen, named Asselin, stepped forth and said that the ground in which the king was about to be buried was his property, which the king had unlawfully taken from him. He therefore opposed the burial of the body on that spot, unless justice were first done him, and compensation made for the property of which he had been wrongfully deprived; and on this point he referred to Rollo, who had once said: "The mightier a man is, the more submission he owes to the laws." Such was the conduct of a plain citizen towards the heir to the power and the influence of William the Conqueror. And the latter respected the right of the citizen, and paid him the price which he demanded for the grave of a king, his enemy. In this single anecdote there is more matter for a due appreciation of the state of the people of Normandy at that time, than in all the laws put together.

From the moment that Normandy was erected by the Germans into an independent duchy, it exercised the most decided influence on the fortunes of France. The third duke of Normandy gave to France a new royal dynasty, that of the Capets. Richard I., duke of Normandy, was Hugh Capet's guardian, and the soul of the states-general of Nyon (987), in which Lothair was deposed and the count



of Paris proclaimed king. It was then that Paris first became the capital of France; and in this circumstance alone lies a weight which has since never ceased to manifest itself in the scales of history. Robert the Devil, or rather *le magnifique*, secured the crown to Henry I. against his own mother, Constance, and his brother; and, for above a century and a half after William the Conqueror, the history of France revolved about Normandy, as the wheel about its axis.

The influence of Normandy on all Europe was not less important, when we consider that it was Normans who protected and at the same time prescribed laws to the pope in Italy, and that it was a Norman who, by the conquest of England, changed the institutions of that country, and established its influence upon the affairs of the continent.

Under John Lackland, the brother and successor of Richard Cœur de Lion, Normandy again became a part of France (in 1204, 292 years after Rollo). But this reunion changed neither the character of the people nor the importance of the province in the history of the mother country. The spirit of independence transfused into the people by the Germanic institutions, compelled Louis X. (1315) to give a new *Charte normande*, which was frequently confirmed, mentioned in almost all the royal ordinances, but, it is true, more frequently evaded; for, like the Germans of more recent times in general, the Normans were content if their right were recognized at least in the form. At length, the sixteenth

century witnessed the formation of another Norman code, the *Coutume de Normandie*, compiled by the noble chancellor L'Hopital; and thus it was found necessary in that age of lawlessness to do justice to the institutions of the ancient Normans.

The influence of Normandy on the fate of France has since been several times clearly demonstrated in history; first in the wars between England and France, which lasted from 1339 upwards of one hundred and twenty years; and afterwards more particularly at the time of the Réformation. In no part of France did the Reformation find so many and so strenuous adherents as in Normandy; the independent spirit of the people, which had maintained itself for ages; the flourishing state of the province, which allowed the people time to meditate upon themselves and their faith; the comparatively high intellectual cultivation of the whole country; lastly, the spiritual affinity with the inhabitants of those states which had first declared in favour of church reform, could not fail to procure for the Reformation disciples in this part of France, and it was not long before the majority of the people were won over to it. Then commenced persecutions. The parliament of Rouen was the murderous tool of a Medicis, and hurled its brands all over the country, wherever freedom of thought dared to display itself. Coligny solicited, at the feet of Francis II., the favour of liberty of conscience in behalf of the unhappy Normans, and the only answer was redoubled persecution, accompanied by redoubled

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cries of anguish from the hapless victims in Normandy. The people then rose; the parliament was obliged to flee from Rouen, and fixed its seat at Louviers. Rouen was besieged by the royal troops; the city was taken by storm; and the adherents of the new doctrine again sealed it with their blood. Condé and Coligny found in Normandy the champions with whom they were soon to prescribe laws to the king; and the second governed the whole province beyond Caen, till the peace of Amboise united both armies, in order jointly to drive the English out of Havre. At length, the night of St. Bartholomew permitted the king of France to say : *L'ordre regne maintenant en France*—and subsequently echoes only of the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism were heard in France : these were at length drowned by the din of a still greater conflict, that began in the schools, was thence transferred to the tribune, the place of election, and the guillotine, and who can tell where it will end ! How extensively the Reformation had taken root in Normandy is proved by the circumstance that, after the revocation of the edict of Nantes, no fewer than 185,000 Normans emigrated, and left upwards of 26,000 dwellings untenanted.

The history of Normandy exhibits to us a truth, on which we often stumble in the history of modern times : here above all is demonstrated the vocation of the Germanic principle to propagate itself throughout the world in these days. The sons of the North here come forward with fire and sword ; at first we

see nothing but destruction, and men join in one general lamentation, as though the scourge of God had fallen upon them. But the ruins of the towns trampled beneath their feet are not yet cleared away, the ashes of their burned habitations yet reek, and we see the germs of another futurity, the germs of liberty and prosperity, springing up out of the ground; and the cry of affrighted humanity was but the precursor of the shouts of joy, or the silent delight, of the next generation. Normandy *seems* also to confirm the unfitness of the Germanic principle to found a permanent state. After a few centuries, it is true, Normandy, as such, disappeared from history and was merged in that of France. But, if we consider that its continuance was impossible solely because it became a colony of England, and that the relations thence arising averted the views and the interests of a great part of the inhabitants of Normandy from England, and directed them towards France; that lastly, the atrocious stupidity of a John Lackland was the cause, in a far greater degree than any Germanic principle in Normandy, of the reunion of the country with France, that reunion ceases to be an evidence in favour of this notion. England herself exhibits proof of the contrary, proof of the creative and conservative power of the Germanic principle. The original German institutions have there gained the most complete victory; and whatever of foreign growth was retained in the English laws, was not capable of outweighing those institutions or obstructing their progress.

In Germany itself, and in the Germanic states, founded immediately on the ruins of Rome, the sword alone subdued the Romans, but the Germanic principle never permanently conquered the Roman. The empire, the whole structure of the laws in Germany, have ever been more Roman than German; and if this union has proved unprolific, it is because the species coupled together were foreign to each other, and incapable of breeding; merely the consequence of the continued struggle between Rome and Germany, which absorbs the energies and prevents all thoughts of new creations. In France, also, this was long the case; but at length, as the Roman language got the better of that afterwards introduced, so the Roman principle gained the ascendancy over the Germanic. It was not till the conclusion of the last century that the latter again entered the lists, and it was more than mimicry if Napoleon thought of Charlemagne. The conflict continues: how it will end is best known to the subterranean powers who spin the thread of human destiny. But assuredly this conflict of two thousand years at least attests the vital energies of the German spirit.

## CHAPTER II.

**Havre; its appearance bespeaks it to be a new town — Founded by Francis I.—Its Extent—Glance at his history—Its general features — The Quays and Basins — Inhabitants — The Mercantile Class — The Exchange — The Cercle du Commerce— Political Sentiments of the Merchants of Havre.**

YOU need take but a single glance at the plan of Havre to be convinced that it is a new town. Most of the streets are perfectly straight and regularly built. People build in this manner only when they plan towns, not when these are huddled together at random. In ancient times, first one house was built on this spot, then another on that, and so on, till at length the place became a hamlet, a village, a town. In modern days it is frequently the idea of an individual that designs a town, and then constructs it in regular form. Francis I. was the founder of Havre, on the site of which formerly stood only detached fishermen's huts. He meant this town to be a bulwark against the incursions of the English into Normandy; and this object was partially attained, for Havre has been several times cannonaded by the English without effect. His second design in the erection of the new town has, on the other hand, wholly miscarried. It was to



be called Françoisville, and of course to perpetuate his name. But fate and chance willed otherwise; and so the town was first called Notre Dame de Grace, then Havre de Grace—for a time, Havre de Marat; such are the freaks of fortune: Francis I., Notre Dame de Grace, and Marat!—and lastly plain Havre, which is certainly the most characteristic appellation that could be given to it.

The original circumference of the town was much more considerable than the present. It embraced three quarters; that of Notre Dame, the Barres, and Percanville (Parc-en-ville.) During the reign of Henry II. the latter was separated in a great measure from the Barres by a new wall. But in the time of Louis XVI. it was again found necessary to enlarge the town; and the quarter of the Basse-ville was added to it. A second enlargement is now requisite, and it will certainly not be long before the walls are again pulled down to afford greater scope for trade. It is an inconvenience to commerce in general that the town is a fortress.

Many books, and thick ones too, have been written on the history of Havre. But you need only pass through the streets to convince yourself that these smooth houses have no history. Havre is like the plain man of whom his neighbours know neither good nor harm, like the excellent king, whose name is scarcely transmitted to posterity. History is in general but the *chronique scandaleuse* of the world; it knows no more than that there two

nations, egged on by false friends, went to loggerheads ; there a mistress squandered away millions ; yonder a minister plunged prince and people into endless misery ; and yonder again a conqueror built himself a triumphal arch of human skulls. All beyond this is seldom worth mentioning. Havre has witnessed few such scandalous, or, as they are commonly called, historical events. During the wars of the Huguenots, it was delivered up by the followers of the new, or rather the old whitewashed, faith to the English ; but, on the conclusion of peace, they joined their former foes to attack the foreigners, and assisted to recover Havre for France. Havre has since been twice or thrice besieged, and two princes were at one time confined in the citadel built by Richelieu. These are nearly all the remarkable events recorded of Havre. The rest of its history revolves round a few thousand ships of war and merchantmen built on its wharfs, so and so many bales of cotton, so and so many hogsheads of sugar, so and so many butts of train oil, and other most peaceable, unhistorical things and occurrences.

Just walk through the streets of the town, and you will perceive still more clearly that it is not old. The last centuries since Francis I. have been more flat, more prosaic, more inexpressive, than any that went before them. All great interests, the people, the church, the faith, had made their exit from history, or passed through their death-struggle in the war of the peasants and in the reformation.



Thenceforward, nothing but the whim of a Louis XIV. or of a courtier, or of a favourite mistress, constituted matter of history, or what people were pleased to call so for three hundred years, till the end of last century. The whole world participated in this vapid frivolity, and whatever was done, whatever was thought and spoken, and even built, bore the impress of this insignificance. At Havre it is stamped in characters not to be mistaken on every house, on the church-doors, and over the altar. The town is an image of the time in which it arose; and whoever is acquainted with the history of that time can tell, without having read a word concerning the history of Havre, the decennium, or at least the century to which every house in the town belongs. Among all the public and private buildings, there is scarcely one that deserves mention on account of its architecture or its history. The mairie, the custom-house, the arsenal, the churches, are just such as one may see every where of the last and the preceding century. The tower of Francis I., which defends the entrance of the harbour, is remarkable only for its colossal walls, and interesting merely for its beautiful prospect and a flag-telegraph, which corresponds with the ships and the observatory on the Hève. The streets are wide and handsome, and the Rue de Paris in particular, the liveliest and the busiest in the town, looks extremely well in an evening, when the inhabitants of Havre parade up and down it by gas-light.

The chief bustle, however, is upon the quays of

the different basins. Of these there are three, besides the Avant-port: the Bassin de la Barre, du Commerce, and du Roi. The first is the largest, the last the smallest. Each of the first two can accommodate about two hundred vessels, and several hundred from all parts of the world are always to be seen in them. As you stroll along these basins, you fancy yourself carried back to the time of the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel. Here is an Englishman or a German cursing and swearing; there, a Spaniard or an Italian singing a song; yonder a Swede is raising his powerful voice, and a little further a Dutchman pouring forth his foggy language. Be your country what it will, you are here sure to hear the accents of your native tongue. And what a bustle upon these quays! In the Avant-port fishing vessels and steamers are arriving or going out; here passengers are hastening to them, there the friends of those who have just landed come to meet them, and have great trouble to extricate them from the hands of the porters. The fishermen are carrying their nets to their vessels, or unloading the booty of the day. On the quays of the Bassin de la Barre, ships are constantly receiving and delivering their cargoes; a thousand hands are at work, and keep time to the monotonous song of the sailors. Here you mostly see those emigrants who seem to have suffered shipwreck on land, carrying on board the relics of their poverty. On the north side of the Bassin du Commerce the whalers are usually unloaded, and beyond them the timber

vessels ; the former you smell at a great distance. On the south side there is a still greater bustle about the ships under repair. Here a vessel is laid flat on her side, there another proudly raises her head, fully equipped to battle with the winds and waves. But one of the most beautiful sights that can be conceived is presented here when the ships are scorched. I know not whether the wood that is used for the purpose, or the tarred oakum that is burned, or the sea-water that is spirited into the fire, communicates such a variety of tints to the flame ; but never did I see such beautiful, such brilliant fire as this. Tinged with all the bright-glowing hues of the rainbow, the flames shoot up the sides of the ships to the height of a house, while black, fantastic clouds of smoke whirl around the masts. Fire is frequently one of the most beautiful, most sublime of objects ; it is the sport, the dance, the exultation of the fire-spirit escaping from his body ; but here the flame is the real poesy of fire, and I ought to be able to write in flames in order duly to describe it.

The quays are the town, the soul of its life, and there you must look about you, there dwell, if you would have any idea of Havre. All the streets around are but suburbs, as it were, but arteries conveying the blood to the heart. Suffice this for the present : I shall have frequent occasion to revert to the heart of Havre.

The inhabitants of Havre, from thirty to thirty-five thousand souls, are a motley mixture of mer-

chants and traders, seafaring men and labourers, French and foreigners. The mercantile class is naturally the first, and consists of the representatives of all the commercial nations — French, English, Americans, Italians, Swedes, even Russians, and a great number of Germans and Swiss, bustle about on 'Change here and murder the French language more or less successfully. Most of them are solely intent on making their fortune as rapidly as possible, that they may retire from business and live upon their income. They are not at home here; you need but cast a glance at the Exchange to convince yourself of that. This edifice is so small and insignificant that it is incapable of containing the concourse of merchants assembling about four o'clock, so that they are obliged to stand in the open air before the building, and to defy wind and weather — the wind of Havre too! They have been talking for many years of erecting a new Exchange, but the matter is taken up very coolly, and we shall find this quite natural, when we consider that these foreigners regard themselves as merely temporary residents in Havre, which they mean to leave in a few years, and can have no particular interest in making a sacrifice in order to provide an Exchange for the future traders of the town.

Whoever has seen the Exchange of London, Paris, Frankfurt, or other great commercial cities, must be struck at first sight by the contrast between these and that of Havre, incontestably the most important mercantile town in France. The sight of

the Paris Exchange, though generally most repulsive to him who can perceive passion lurking beneath the frigid features, is nevertheless imposing. There stand the generals, and their aid-de-camps fly to and fro, carrying their orders to the commanders on the flanks and in the centre, and hasten back to bring reports and to receive new commissions. There is frequently decided the fate of Europe, and in the noise and tumult you fancy that you hear the cry of nations for succour. A universal slave-market could not be more animated, more striking. The very feeling that here the welfare of the world is at stake, that ministers fall, when the one or the other party gives way, that crowns and thrones depend on the issue of the contest, that nations are put into the balance, produces in the temple of Mammon an impression, which, though awful, is at the same time grand.

In Havre, on the contrary, the Exchange is just like an ant-hill. All wind in and out like a tangled web; none issues orders, none seems to obey. So many bales of cotton are to be had at such or such a price; so many hogsheads of sugar lie at the entrepot, so many are bespoken, and so many on the way. These are interests, it is true, but the world scarcely notices whether a hundred thousand bales of cotton more or less arrive, and at most a hundred manufactories and a few hundred thousand work-people are immediately concerned in the matter. You might very easily pass the Exchange of Havre without suspecting that the whole mercantile world

of the first commercial town of France was assembled there, or perhaps imagine that the persons whom you saw were merely brought together by some public auction. In this town, the Exchange has not the dramatic any more than the deeply offensive character that it has in great banking cities.

He who would make himself intimately acquainted with the mercantile class of Havre should subscribe to the Cercle du Commerce. If the Exchange is likely to produce a mean opinion of the importance of the commerce of Havre, the Cercle du Commerce makes a very different impression. In one of the finest and largest buildings in the town, handsome and spacious rooms, arranged partly for reading, partly for play, and partly for social conversation, and most splendidly furnished, are open to every stranger who is introduced by one of the members. Here are to be found almost all the newspapers and periodical publications of the capital, several English papers, one German, the Hamburg Börsenhalle, and a tolerably select library. You need not come hither often to discover of what spirit the generation frequenting this place is. To the middle pillar in the principal room is affixed a black board in a handsome gilt frame, with an inscription in gold letters, which gold letters record that twelve or thirteen years ago Louis Philippe, then duke of Orleans, now king of the French, honoured the Cercle du Commerce with his presence. Above this memorial hangs the picture of the king. On the same



place hung seven years ago Louis XVIII., and who can tell who may hang there seven years hence? For the present, however, Louis XVIII. is banished to an adjoining cabinet, where he may hope for better times. The sentiments of the merchant of Havre are extremely loyal, and at the present moment *philippic*, because the king's name is Philip. He is an enemy to every thing that looks like political movement, and frequently belongs to the *furieux de modération*. I happened to be here in 1835, just at the time of the April trials, and recollect a dialogue which took place. "All (the accused) ought to be condemned to death," said one of the peaceable merchants. "All?" replied another, of more moderate sentiments, "that would be severe, nay, cruel." "*N'importe!*" rejoined the first; "at any rate there are no innocent persons among them; they are all monsters and incendiaries." "But, if there should, nevertheless, be an innocent man or two among them?" asked the second, with modest doubt. "I tell you," cried the first, there is not an innocent man among them—'tis impossible. Off with their heads! The galleys would be far too good for such *monstres*."

Here, indeed, much that had been a riddle to me in Paris appeared perfectly clear. I saw what Louis Philippe might reckon upon, and why he went to work with such despatch. But he ought to consider that in the time of the revolution the men of terror in Havre did not deem it necessary to strike off a single head. In this fact there is a



lesson, and a better one than in the sanguinary words dropped at the Cercle du Commerce.

To most of my Parisian friends, all that Fonfrède, the ultra-doctrinaire, wrote and said, appeared inexplicable, and they cried, "C'est un fou !" After I had been at Havre I half comprehended him, and now that I am here a second time, every word is quite clear to me : for here I have found that he is really in his sentiments the representative of a party—that is to say, of commerce. He is a native of a sea-port, I believe Bordeaux, where nearly the same spirit and the same interests predominate as in Havre, and where, of course, people think much the same as here. "We have tried the Chambers long enough, and it is plain that nothing is to be expected of them. Thus far they have done nothing, but they have prevented much good from being done. The whole chamber of deputies is as stupid as possible ; nothing but a strong executive government can save France, and the Chamber conceives that it can do nothing better than weaken that, and shackle it more and more. Lawyers have the ascendancy in it, and they seek nothing but quirks and quibbles. But, as for us, we want quiet, nothing but quiet ; we have plenty of liberty, more than we know what to do with. An enlightened absolutism alone can save France, and secure it from future dangers."

Such are the sentiments which are the order of the day here in the Cercle du Commerce, and are held most certainly by a majority of the mercantile people of this town. They appear, however, like

Fonfrède himself, to place no real confidence in this enlightened absolutism, for the invariable finale of this song, sung in the greatest variety of tunes, is: "ça va mal, et Dieu sait comment ça finira." You see from all this that Fonfrède and the doctrinaires who steered with him under full sail for enlightened absolutism were not building in the air, as it was generally supposed in Paris. How long the edifice would stand if they were suffered to complete it, and whom it would probably bury in its fall, are different questions. I doubt, however, whether the members of the Cercle du Commerce, if they reflected upon the subject, would do any thing but merely cry out the more loudly, "Dieu de Dieu, ça va mal!" for, in the first place, all this has no influence on the prices of cotton, sugar, &c., which, like the *rentes* in Paris, are their political thermometer, the alpha and omega of their social creed, nay, their whole existence.

### CHAPTER III.

**Commercial Consequence of Havre—Imports—Report of the Committee of the Merchants of Havre on various commercial questions ; on the duty on Coal and Corn, and on the future condition of the French West India Colonies—Remarks in the same Report on the importation of Iron ; and on the general principles of the French Commercial Code—Contradiction between the political and the commercial principles of the merchants of Havre—Neglect of the local interests of the town by the Government—Proposal for a commercial Congress—Opinion of the Havre Chamber of Commerce on the Sugar Question—Establishment of a Bank at Havre—Cotton Trade.**

IN the year 1836, goods to the amount of 746,436,000 kilogrammes, and to the value of 643,336,000 francs, passed through the different entrepôts in all France. Of these 173,343,000 kilogrammes, and 194,824,000 francs fell to the share of Havre. Of course nearly one fourth in amount, and nearly one third in total value, of all the goods circulated in France pass through Havre. This proportion proves clearly enough the importance of the trade of that town.

Marseilles alone stands in numerical respect above Havre. In the same year the amount of goods which passed through the warehouses of that city

was 316,088,000 kilogrammes, consequently almost one half more than in Havre. The value, on the other hand, was only 201,760,000 francs, so that in this respect the excess in favour of Marseilles was only about seven millions of francs. But what gives greater consequence to Havre than Marseilles is the circumstance that Havre is in the first bloom of youthful prosperity ; that it is only in about the last twenty years that it has raised itself to the rank of one of the first commercial towns of France ; that it is extending its connexions from year to year, nay, from month to month. Marseilles carries on the French commerce with all the countries contiguous to the Mediterranean ; Havre, on the other hand, is for France the entrepot of the whole world, excepting the Mediterranean. Russia, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Belgium, England, Asia, Africa, and America, send their ships to Havre, as the merchants of Havre send their's to those countries. This trade is increasing every year ; and, if of late the same is the case with the Levant, especially by means of Algiers, yet the proportion is very far inferior.

The imports of the principal articles of trade from the year 1833 to 1837 were as follows.

# IMPORTS.

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	1833	1834	1835	1836	1837
Cotton . . . . .	210,598	201,419	214,509	260,286	248,859 bales.
Sugar . . . . .	50,380	69,430	55,549	45,287	31,783 hhds.
Coffee . . . . .	14,300,000	15,500,000	15,450,000	17,726,515	18,559,000 pounds.
Rice . . . . .	14,532	8,258	8,466	11,528	— caaks.
Tobacco . . . . .	3,236	4,622	5,516	6,350	11,192 hhds.
	{	—	719	1,351	2,865 <i>billes</i> .
Potash . { American	12,242	10,197	4,684	6,515	7,814 hhds.
{ Northern	2,378	758	1,494	1,666	1,389 <i>futa</i> .
Indigo . { Indian .	4,630	5,958	3,614	4,834	3,551 chests.
{ American }	490	555	37	36	97 <i>larroco</i> .
Dyeing Wood . . . . .	9,000	9,400	8,950	8,635	5,475 <i>milliers</i> .
Mahogany . . . . .	13,675	15,380	12,640	17,603	20,188 <i>billes</i> .
Leather, different sorts	118,094	209,520	180,240	208,390	134,980 skins.
Northern Hides . . . . .	8,177	13,710	9,684	12,000	21,236 do.
	{	5,258	2,493	3,258	3,216 packages.
Tin . . . . .	13,932	20,370	—	—	27,013 blocks.
Whalebone . . . . .	16,550	12,362	7,645	11,155	17,708 packages.
Whale Oil . . . . .	4,400	3,550	5,263	5,660	9,738 <i>milliers</i> .
Ivory . . . . .	1,074	1,550	1,491	499	2,769 teeth.
	{	86	40	26	65 packages.
Foreign Wool. . . . .	1,052	1,115	6,955	8,510	3,377 bales.

## VESSELS AND IMPORTS INTO HAVRE.

Years.	Large Vessels for Foreign Trade.	Weight of Goods.	Coasters.	Weight of Goods.	Total of Vessels.	Total Weight of Goods.
		Tons.		Tons.		Tons.
1828	980	193,233	2,064	104,766	3,044	297,999
1832	1,051	218,520	2,545	170,631	3,596	388,851
1833	889	207,624	2,521	159,093	3,410	366,717
1834	1,054	237,984	2,703	167,211	3,757	405,175
1835	1,181	258,480	2,764	168,250	3,945	426,730
1836	1,297	288,985	2,664	158,269	3,961	447,254

These tables may suffice to afford an idea of the importance of the trade of Havre in general: of cotton I shall treat separately hereafter. It is evidently on the increase. The year 1837 was a severe one, and many merchants in other places fell under the strokes of misfortune. In Havre not a single house of consequence failed; and only a few third or fourth rate firms, which must have sunk even without the crisis, were obliged to suspend their payments. But what furnishes stronger proof of the vital energy of the trade of Havre is that, in spite of this crisis, it was able to extend its connexions, and even to establish in this unfortunate year lines of steam-vessels from Havre to Caen, to Dunkirk, and to Rotterdam, and one, still more distant, to Lisbon.

In the year 1835, the government purposed to frame a new tariff of duties. On this occasion the merchants of Havre appointed a committee, consisting of the élite of the commercial men of that town, to consult upon the interests and wants of the trade of Havre in particular, and of the trade of France in general, as well as upon the necessary principles of a new tariff of duties. The sentiments of this committee may be taken without scruple for those of the majority of the mercantile class in Havre; and I shall therefore show what they were from the principal points touched upon in the "*Rapport de la Commission commerciale du Havre à ses Commettans*," published in October 1835.



In regard to the coal question, the committee declared that foreign coal ought not to pay any import duty, but only a fee for weighing. In like manner, it decided in favour of the free importation of cast iron and machinery, on payment of a mere toll on weighing. In the same spirit, it unanimously desired an immediate reduction of the duty on foreign iron to 50 francs upon 1000 kilogrammes, remarking that "iron was imported duty-free till 1814; that the alterations then introduced were declared by the government to be only a temporary measure, and that the continuance of the existing import duty was a breach of faith, tending solely to the exclusive benefit of a few, to whose interests it was not right to sacrifice the interest of all; that, lastly, it was a crying injustice to attempt to impose upon a great number of branches of home manufacture the obligation to maintain a competition with similar branches of foreign industry."

As to foreign wool, the committee assented only to an import duty of from four to six per cent. *ad valorem*. It observes here that in England foreign wool could formerly be imported duty-free; that, on the remonstrance of the owners of flocks, a duty was first imposed in 1802 of 5*s.* 3*d.*, afterwards, in 1813, of 6*s.* 8*d.*, and, lastly, in 1819, of 56*s.* per cwt.; the consequence of which has been a considerable diminution in the quantity of cloth exported, and of course a diminution in the consumption and a reduction in the price of native wool.

For imported corn the committee proposed a uni-

form duty for all France of two francs for 100 kilogrammes.

Lastly, the question relative to the future condition of the colonies, a question which the law concerning sugar only rendered more complicated than ever, is thus summed up by the committee :

“ 1. Shall the *droits différentiels* which France allows for the benefit of the French colonies, as a compensation for the monopoly which France exercises towards those colonies, be abolished, in which case that monopoly itself must be abolished, that is to say, on the one hand, the French colonies shall be at liberty to sell their productions to whomsoever they please, and, on the other hand, all foreign productions shall be permitted to be imported by French ships on paying the same duties as French productions ; and, as a necessary consequence, shall our colonies be permitted to import foreign productions in foreign vessels on paying a certain duty, or even without any such duty, in the ships of foreign countries which grant us a like right for their colonies ? Or,

“ 2. If all the conditions of the first part of the preceding question be maintained, shall no restrictions be laid on the trade which our colonies might carry on with foreign countries ? that is to say, shall they have a right to import the productions which they require for their consumption from all countries and under every flag without any compensating duties ?

“ The committee decided affirmatively on the first

part of the first question, and the majority then declared in favour of the extension of the liberty granted in the second, namely, that our colonies should have a right to import all productions requisite for consumption, under any flag whatever, without any *droits différentiels*."

Thus did the representatives of the mercantile class of Havre pronounce in favour of the commercial emancipation of the colonies. The advocates of this system alleged, as it appears from the statement of the motives for the above decision: "If we wish to release France from the monopoly of the colonies, we desire not this benefit for ourselves alone, for we wish the colonies, on their part, to be emancipated from the monopoly which the mother-country imposes upon them. We wish that our colonies should have liberty to procure unobstructed from foreign commerce all such productions as they need for their consumption, if French commerce cannot supply them cheaper, or at least as cheaply. We desire, further, that the colonies may have a right to sell their own productions, without restriction, to any one who may offer them a higher price, and that they may find in this faculty a prosperity which at present they do not enjoy, and which the manufacture of beet-root sugar is far from promising them, if the system now prevailing be continued."

It fell originally within the plan of the committee to pronounce an opinion respecting the tobacco monopoly, and the writer of the report says in the preamble to it: "The monopoly of tobacco, which

we had considered as a particularly important question, was to be the subject of our last discussions. But, after the enactment of the law which prolongs the existence of this monopoly, and after the resolution since passed by the Chamber to institute an inquiry on this subject, we have thought it right not to pursue the consideration of this question, as it appeared to us undoubted that, if this inquiry takes place — and we hope that it will take place — it will lead to the fulfilment of our wishes on this important subject, that is to say, to the abolition of a monopoly so adverse to all principles, and to the imposition of some other tax that shall satisfy at once the wants of the exchequer and the wishes of the friends to freedom of trade and commerce.”

How far the hopes of the committee have hitherto been fulfilled every one knows. The inquiry seems to have lost itself in the bureaux of the Chamber.

To characterise still more strongly the spirit of the Havre commercial committee, and consequently of the trading class there, I shall subjoin a passage or two on the importation of iron, likewise translated from the introduction to the report in question. “The principles now prevailing relative to iron owe their origin to a monstrous abuse of the executive power which fell into the hands of the people of various colours, to whom the events of 1814 consigned the supreme authority in France. Justice to the memory of Louis XVIII. requires us, however, to declare here what is universally known, that this

prince, on his first return to France, was extremely averse to this measure. But it was an affair of too great interest for those to whom we have just adverted not to be pushed forward by them with all their might. The repugnance which Louis XVIII. had manifested to this measure was thus overcome. The king, nevertheless, gave way on this remarkable occasion only on receiving an assurance that this measure should be but temporary, and that it was merely destined to prevent the difficulties in which the proprietors and manufacturers of French iron would be involved by the refusal of a momentary protection. Since then there has been no want of illusions not only for upholding the regulations of 1814, but for aggravating them by a new law issued in 1822.

“What were meanwhile the consequences of this law? Such as the impartial and clear-sighted had foreseen and predicted. The *declared* object of the law was a protection granted to the smelting works; but its *secret* object was a tribute imposed for the benefit of the proprietors of forests and forges. This latter object was attained, and that not only to the injury of the country in general, but also to the injury of the French masters of smelting-houses in particular, who were not themselves owners of the fuel requisite for their business, and who thus found themselves, from the rise in its price, in a much less advantageous situation than they would have been if things had been left on their former footing.

“Against the consequences that must necessarily result from the existing order of things are we to place the regard due to acquired rights? But what, we would ask, is the meaning of acquired rights? We, for our parts, allow no validity to acquired rights, unless they have been rightfully acquired. But we have shewn what is the origin of our present legislation relative to iron, and that the so-called rights of the iron-masters in France rest solely on a manifest and intolerable usurpation. Admitting this, is it not, we ask, trampling under foot all principles, if one would appeal on this question to the respect that is due to acquired rights?”

Such is the language held by the most respectable merchants of Havre! The revolution, democratic principles, are transfused into the life and blood of the French. We shall have frequent occasion to remark this elsewhere in the manufacturers, nay even in the functionaries of the state.

But to return to the report. The committee proposed also a new law of customs, and expressed its sentiments on that subject, as well as on the present regulations, in the introduction to the report.

“If,” it is there said, “we examine the existing tariff of the customs, we shall soon convince ourselves that the trade and manufactures of France are governed by a code which is every where at variance with itself, which is based on false principles, and is adverse not only to the general wants



of the country, but also to the interest of private individuals, which the code appears to keep in view.

“In the latter point, for instance, are not the most striking contradictions exhibited by the system of our administration, when, on the one hand, it declares on every occasion that it aims at giving native industry the advantage over foreign, while, on the other, it never ceases to withhold from this industry the most natural means of enabling it to defy competition, inasmuch as it deprives it of those foreign raw materials, the like to which are produced by France, no matter on what conditions? This system has hitherto produced totally different results from what were expected at the time of its adoption.

“On this important subject the Constituent Assembly set an example for true principles; for, in its wisdom, it either wholly exempted raw materials, as well as all articles of subsistence of the great mass, or subjected them to very trifling import duties. The men of that great epoch, while they voted the abolition of all ancient privileges, of which most of them had inherited some from their ancestors, would never have been capable of conceiving the idea of establishing for their own advantage other privileges a hundred times more detrimental to the general interest than those which they had destroyed.”

In regard, lastly, to the principles on which a new customs regulation ought to be framed, the committee declared itself,



"1. For an immediate reduction of the import duty on raw materials to a very low rate ; and,

"2. For the fixing of a maximum of 20 per cent. for the import duty on all other productions."

From all this I think I may venture to say that the mercantile class of Havre in general espouses the principles of the *progrès* and of free trade ; nay, I might go further, and assert that the merchants, who, in every political struggle, have shewn themselves the most decided partisans of the *juste milieu*, who frequently belong, as we have elsewhere seen, to the *furieux de modération*, are, on all commercial questions, real Jacobins, who cannot endure any monopolies or privileges, no matter whether belonging to nobility or *bourgeoisie*, and who do not even respect acquired rights if they have not been rightfully acquired.

Whence this contradiction ? Among the parties called forth by the new constitution of things in 1830, the republican soon drove the others into the back-ground ; and among the republicans there were individuals who attracted notice by their unpractical principles, some of them dreaming of an absolute equality, others striving to justify the memory of Robespierre. The friends of the government contrived to profit by these views of a portion of the republican party ; and soon the majority of the nation, or at least of the *nation officielle*, as the electors are here styled, were republicans, nothing but advocates of the *lex agraria* and the supremacy of the guillotine. So long as the

struggle with the republicans continued, every one, to what opposition soever he belonged, who shewed himself adverse to the government, was regarded as an auxiliary of the republicans and condemned with them.

The commercial world in Havre now saw in the republic a new European war, and had not yet forgotten that, during the wars of Napoleon, grass grew in the streets of the town. It was therefore but natural that the majority should energetically espouse the cause of the government, in the stability of which alone they could expect security for their interests. Thus, in all political struggles they became partisans of the *juste milieu*.

Where, on the other hand, politics were not concerned, people could resign themselves to their feelings, which were governed by the events of the past and by the position of Havre; and then was manifested the real character of the trade of Havre.

The merchants of Havre must necessarily be in their principles the democrats of commerce. They have no manufactories, no forests, no coal and iron-works to represent; they are the agents of all France. It cannot suffice them that one class, even though it were the whole of the *bourgeoisie*, is in a satisfactory state; for if, on the other hand, the great mass is distressed, there is a stagnation in the trade of Havre, which supplies so much as one fourth of the demands of all France; while these decrease or increase according as, not one class, but the whole

mass of the people — not perhaps one million, but all the thirty-two millions of the French—are in a satisfactory state, or not.

Havre must, therefore, be the representative of the public weal of the whole, and as such it will assuredly, in time, display its hostility to the theory of M. Guizot and the government.

The views of the mercantile class of Havre are far more extensive than those of the same class in any of the other commercial towns of France. They stand on the topmost summit of the mountain, and overlook five divisions of the world. In constant intercourse with England and America, they there find patterns, who give them daily fresh lessons on the high interests of trade, and point out to them what urgently requires to be done, or the rocks which they ought to avoid. Hence their notions respecting free trade ; hence their enmity to every thing that looks like monopoly and privilege, at least in commerce.

Hence there is every reason to believe that the mercantile class of Havre will really form, in time, an opposition against the government, because its views rest on a totally different basis from those of the latter. The local interests of Havre will perhaps only forward this transformation, as these, of importance to all France, require considerable sums, which, in the present state of things, with a military peace establishment on the war footing, are scarcely to be raised. Havre feels itself cramped by the fortifications, and desires their demolition ; but the

engineer department desires that they should be maintained. The basins begin to be inadequate, and, to avoid being obliged to undertake fresh works every ten years, it is necessary at once to commence new ones on a large scale. The trade of Havre, moreover, demands docks, and lastly the sea-sand threatens to choke up the entrance of the harbour, and this produces a necessity for other considerable hydraulic works, dykes, and canals. For many years the trade of Havre has been proposing all these improvements which, in Paris, in committees elected there, investigating there, deciding there, have to encounter the prejudices of the engineers and the officers of the *ponts et chaussées*.

In the report of the Havre committee, to which I have so frequently referred, it proposed that deputies should be sent from all the commercial towns of France to Paris, to form there a congress for the discussion of all disputable commercial questions. This would have been a sort of Constituent Assembly of trade, and, as that effected a political revolution, so would this bring about a commercial revolution. This, too, M. Duchatel, the then minister of commerce, seemed to apprehend; and he preferred consulting the states-general, that is to say, in order to anticipate the democratically-elected commercial congress, the commercial inquiry was instituted by the minister. He wrote at the same time to all the chambers of commerce, to induce them to oppose the election of members of congress, and

this they did with success. But for that proposal of a general congress, originating with Havre, and approved every where else, the inquiry concerning trade, which was destined solely to frustrate that scheme, and has had scarcely any other result, would never have taken place.

But who can answer for it that, precisely on account of the inutility of that inquiry, the idea of a commercial congress may not be again taken up sooner or later, and then a commercial revolution begin? I, for one, would not guarantee this. The Chamber, composed chiefly of land-owners, who are led by the greatest proprietors of woods and iron works, (with the civil list itself at their head) seems at least not to think of the radical reforms demanded by commerce, or if it does think of them, it seems to do so merely for the purpose of rendering them impossible.

But, whatever turn all these matters may take in future, there is no doubt that Havre, from its position, will stedfastly adhere to the principles of free trade.

I cannot quit this subject without adverting to one or two particular circumstances.

The sugar law has lately revived the question of the emancipation of the colonies. The colonies are no longer in a condition to compete with the home-made sugar, and, therefore, applied for permission to dispose of their sugars to other countries. The Havre chamber of commerce, being asked its opinion by the minister, declared itself against this applica-

tion of the colonies. One might hence suppose that the sentiments of the mercantile class of Havre on this subject had changed since 1835, as the above-mentioned committee expressed itself in favour of an almost unlimited commercial emancipation of the colonies. The majority of the merchants of Havre think on this point just as they did three or four years ago. The members of the chamber of commerce, on the contrary, happen most of them to be *personally* interested in the maintenance of the colonial system. The colonies owe large sums to the French merchants, and these are in part periodically paid, or at least covered by goods sent to their creditors. Of course the moment the commercial emancipation of the colonies should be acknowledged, their creditors would lose this their principal guarantee, for the goods would then to a certainty be sent to foreign ports. In the Havre chamber of commerce the creditors of the colonies constitute the majority, and this accounts for the contradiction.

A second important circumstance is the establishment of a Havre bank. The negotiations occasioned by this plan, before it was confirmed, are likewise highly characteristic of the spirit prevailing in Havre.

M. Balthazard, secretary to the commercial committee, and writer, in a great measure, of the report of 1835, incontestably one of the cleverest of his profession, and who, moreover, owes his present position to industry and sagacity, proposed three or



four years ago, at the time when the crisis was most severely felt, the erection of a Havre local bank for facilitating the circulation of money. The first-rate merchants could scarcely be pleased to see such a project originate with a trader of the second class, and, therefore, refused to take any share in the bank speculation. The smaller traders, on the other hand, perceived in such a bank a ray of hope, and embraced the plan without hesitation. The provisional shares in the bank soon rose, and in a very short time the millions destined for it were subscribed.

But the commercial aristocracy, which had probably conceived that without its aid a bank could not possibly be established, was displeased at its success, and felt that it was on the point of having the means of its former influence, money, wrested from its hand; and that its consequence would suffer if the enterprize were to be accomplished without it. Its members, therefore, resolved also to issue proposals for a bank on a much more extensive scale than that of M. Balthazard; and, after the latter had arranged with the minister of commerce for the confirmation of his plan, after the Havre chamber of commerce and the bank of France had already given their opinion in favour of it, the commercial aristocracy of Havre published a new project, and the first houses of Havre and Paris, and even many abroad, soon subscribed for—I forget how many hundred millions. This new plan, however, could do no more than delay the first



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for a time. In spite of all the efforts of the Paris and Havre bankers, the indefatigable exertions of M. Balthazard and his friends succeeded in establishing the justice of his cause, and in obtaining the confirmation of the proposed bank, on condition that the intended capital should be increased by a few millions for the subscribers to the second project.

This was the victory of the *tiers-état*, or the *bourgeoisie* of the trade of Havre. Till then a certain limited number of wealthy merchants in Havre had taken the lead on every occasion, and been at the head of all matters, as well in the municipal council, as in the chamber of commerce, and the tribunal of commerce. M. Balthazard became director of the bank; the majority of the governors likewise belonged to the middle class of traders. The consequences of this victory soon appeared in other elections, so that a sort of regeneration, as it may be called, has taken place here.

It would be difficult to decide what influence this may have in the sequel for the maintenance of the principles to which I have adverted; but it appears to me that a new generation, with the above-mentioned sentiments, founded on the wants and the position of Havre, cannot be without results for the commerce of that town, and, consequently, the commerce of France.

Among the many branches of trade carried on in Havre, that in cotton is indisputably the most

# IMPORTATION OF COTTON.

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important, as the following statement will demonstrate.

In the Year	Importation. Bales.		Exportation and Consumption. Bales.	
	France.	Havre.	France.	Havre.
1825	204,572	120,644	216,460	121,644
—6	320,174	214,085	281,001	183,585
—7	290,617	169,274	279,693	166,774
—8	206,132	141,735	239,723	161,235
—9	242,230	175,930	264,780	185,430
—30	282,752	191,186	250,784	163,686
—1	215,393	137,501	243,843	164,501
—2	259,159	184,228	273,463	185,228
—3	305,633	210,593	276,387	193,593
—4	274,307	201,419	301,652	213,419
—5	324,425	214,509	308,736	217,709
—6	397,232	260,286	357,212	233,586
—7	344,186	248,859	360,760	261,359

According to this account, the importation of Havre is to that of all France as about 24 : 34, and the exportation and consumption as 26 : 36. From 1826 to 1837 the importation of cotton increased in all France in the proportion of 20 : 34, and in Havre of 12 : 24; the exportation and consumption in all France from 21 : 36, in Havre from 12 : 26. The importation into all France rose, therefore, 14 : 34, and in Havre 17 : 34; the exportation and the consumption in France 65 : 156, and in Havre 91 : 156. The cotton trade, therefore, is concentrating itself more and more in Havre, and this town will, certainly, be in a short time the only entrepot of that commodity.

The great commercial crisis was particularly felt in this branch of trade. Millions upon millions were lost in Havre alone. It appears as though this crisis had not been the sole cause of these many losses. The circumstance that in 1836 a considerable quantity of cotton was sold, that in this branch the importers gained large sums, caused a certain number of merchants who had never bought cotton before, or who had taken it of the importers, to send their orders to America, so that the number of importers was thereby increased, and the number of purchasers diminished. The productiveness of the last crop in America soon led the purchasers to hope for better prices, and thus the number of the latter became for the moment still smaller, and the embarrassment of the importers so much the greater : the inferior houses were obliged to sell at lower prices, and perhaps, even without the money crisis, there might still have been a cotton crisis in Havre and in Liverpool, where similar circumstances had taken place. The crisis only contributed to increase the embarrassment. Owing to the scarcity of money, the prices of manufactured goods fell, so that they were no longer in proportion with those of the raw material, and the manufactories stopped. The want of money had throughout all France a further result, which was felt the more sensibly here. The great majority of the manufacturers have no floating capital, no ready money, with which they may make their purchases. They are, therefore, obliged, whenever they buy, to carry their bills to the bankers,



and the moment these close their coffers, most of the manufactories must necessarily stand still.

All these things together, and probably there may have been many other causes, explain how it happened that in the first three months of 1837 little more than half the quantity of cotton sold in the corresponding period of the preceding year was disposed of (1836, 109,833 bales; 1837, 66,037 bales.)

We see, moreover, from the above, from the influence of the money crisis, which after all is the principal point, how all things at the present day dovetail into one another, and how the standing still of a single wheel is sufficient to produce a stoppage of the whole curious and complicated machine. Were we to seek the consequences of this idea, the final cause of the commercial events which have of late years shaken the whole world, we should be led to ground that is very slippery, and where it is given to but few to walk with firm step. I shall, therefore, stick to cotton.

At the time when the crisis was at its height, when the cotton speculators frequently lost a hundred thousand francs in one day, and every fresh post threatened them with ruin, I was in the habit of frequenting the Exchange. Not a trace of inward anxiety was perceptible in the manner and behaviour of the merchants. And this pained my heart more than if they had lamented and wept over their misfortunes. What must have been the feelings of these people, while talking with calm, imperturbable

countenance about cotton, it is not difficult to conceive. House and home, wife and family, the gains of twenty years, the hopes of a provision for the future, the portion of a beloved daughter, were at stake, and the explosion of a single failure might involve twenty other houses in ruin. The practised eye of the physiognomist detects traces of such moments in the features of almost every merchant; they are to be found in the hearts of all: for such situations recur too often not to leave indelible marks behind them. Every merchant has thought so often of the possibility of his own ruin, that most can hear of that of a friend, nay even a brother, almost with unconcern. These incessant intense hopes and fears must, in the end, blunt all the humane feelings and almost necessarily turn the merchant into a cold calculator. He has perhaps assisted a friend in distress, and the next hour he receives an account which robs him of all the rest of his property, and plunges him the deeper, as at this moment he has not at his command what he has lent to his friend. He was perhaps humane till he had to do with a swindler or a dupe.

Accuse him not, if he is deaf to the voice of humanity; he has worked in a shop where the constant clank of heavy hammers upon the ringing metal has destroyed his hearing. The shop! the shop! that is the evil; but how to dispense with it, how to render it superfluous, would be a prize question for which the treasures of the most productive gold mine should be offered. But, externally cold as



the merchant appears to us at the moment when his all is at stake, still the disease is raging within. His resolutions at such times are like nervous convulsions. An accidental word is to him a ray of hope, and he seeks and grasps the plank floating upon the waves.

Something like this was witnessed here in the days of the crisis, when M. Balthazard brought forward his bank scheme. Frequently had he before proposed such a bank, but his plan had been disregarded. But now the inferior merchants perceived in it a ray of hope for their depressed situation, and caught eagerly at the idea. Shares soon rose, and then every body wanted to buy. The bank for a moment usurped the place of cotton. Men who saw themselves on the brink of ruin, who were no longer masters of a few thousand francs, subscribed for a hundred or a thousand shares, with a view to sell them in a few days, and with the profit to relieve themselves from their embarrassments. Thus in a short time the requisite millions were subscribed. The bank, therefore, is the legitimate daughter of the money crisis and the cotton crisis.

Upon the whole, cotton here plays the principal part, and much that is said and done may at last easily be translated into the magic word, cotton. The whole town feels this influence, and cotton is the barometer of its prosperity. Bakers and butchers, coffee-houses and wine-houses, labourers and seamen, are only one great galvanic chain, for which cotton is the somewhat material magnetic

spark that runs through and warms it ; and when this is wanting every thing is at a stand-still, all lies fallow. The cotton crisis, therefore, was felt in every part of Havre, and not till it was over did the people there begin to breathe more freely.

That almost every thing here may be translated into cotton, I have frequently had occasion to remark in less serious moments, nay, I have even seen persons playing at cards, in the Cercle du Commerce, to avoid saying so many franks, stake a bale of cotton upon a card. The first question and the last, the *ultima ratio* of great part of the Havre world, is cotton. Loyally as they are in general disposed towards the king, they are far more sincerely devoted to cotton ; and they would to-morrow change their sentiments and their creed to republican or Mahometan, if the Republic or the Grand Signor could in like manner be translated into cotton, if they were capable of guaranteeing a better price for it and a certain demand for a few years to come. But as this is not exactly possible, they remain what they are, and never swear by any thing higher than "*Nom de coton ! vive Louis Philippe !*"

## CHAPTER IV.

State of Society at Havre—Esprit in the Capital and the Provinces—Separation of the sexes in company—Arts and Sciences—Havre Literary Society—Public Library—M. Corbière and his Naval Novels—M. Morlents—Archives of Havre—Drouin, the Marine Painter—Musical Mass—A Visit—The Theatre.

WE are in the Passion week ; Easter, the festival of joy, is at the door, while the snow lies six inches deep on the roofs and in the streets ; and on the window-panes the dreams of the night are frozen into flowers and arabesques. Bad weather is every where an unwelcome guest, but in a French provincial town a real misfortune. In all Havre there is not a single reading-room, and in the coffee-houses you hear nothing but the clatter of dominoes on the cold marble tables. In all the towns of France, down to the very smallest, every thing is an imitation of the Paris pattern. What in Paris strikes at least, if it does not attract, by its magnitude or by its novelty, excites in the country, inasmuch as it is a copy, a caricature, of Parisian life, sincere pity, frequently head-ache, and in general yawning and ennui, when a person comes from Paris and has there seen what is new in the country

expire months, nay perhaps years, ago of old age, and helped to escort it to the grave. In a French provincial town, you must either turn hermit, or, what is still worse, domino-player, if you would not die of ennui. It is true that I have as yet lived only in Havre, Rouen, and Nancy, and therefore can speak of these French towns alone—Strasburg is German—but as to the others, I pledge myself that you have there only the above dreadful alternative.

But the societies? O yes, there gushes forth *esprit*. My head yet aches with what I have drunk of it in Paris, and now the bitter-sweet extract drawn from the feuilletons and the reminiscences of the capital and diluted with the water of ennui! I was generally disgusted even in the capital with *esprit*, the ardent spirit of wit, wherever it was served up. In the country it seems still more unpleasant, because it is a worn-out article, that could not be disposed of in Paris. In order to be truly *spirituel*, to make yourself a reputation with the *monde comme il faut*, in Paris with tolerable certainty, in the country without the least doubt, you need only an abundant share of impudence and frivolity, and a glib tongue. Take it into your head to think before you speak, to distinguish yourself, to say something clever and sensible, and you are a ruined man. A story seasoned with some scandal about Monsieur X. or Madame Y., an answer that says neither yes nor no, and which, if possible, shall dispense all the ladies present from exhibiting proofs of their own *esprit*, an ever ready

anecdote, a piece of town news, duly mixed with a sufficient addition of light digestible phrases — this is the best receipt for compounding *esprit*.

*Esprit* is the fashionable disease of the mind in France, sentimentality of the heart in Germany. Both consume the energies of the man, and are the cankerworm of all that is excellent here and there. The only difference is that spirituality is capable of defending, sentimentality of excusing, every meanness; that the former can make every great action a silly one, and the latter every silly action a great one. If both were placed in the balance, it is difficult to say which scale would sink.

If the French *spirituels* are intolerable to me, the German, on the contrary, are ludicrous. An ape is and remains an ape; and when you watch his antics long and often, the thing becomes extremely tedious; but when a bear attempts to imitate the movements of an ape, the matter then assumes a dangerous complexion; for you must perforce kill yourself with laughing. In the country, societies often made a similar impression upon me with their *esprit*; for they lack the Paris polish, for which one is willing to make at least some allowance. But in general the thing was only tedious, for there is nothing more wearisome than mediocrity. The *spirituels* of the provinces are too good to be always and exclusively used for farce, and too bad to amuse. And what is the worst, you discover but too soon that all is not nature, that it is mere imitation of a Paris fashion, an only half-conceived part, learned by rote from a feuilleton or a review.

A peculiarity in most of the companies of Havre is the strict separation of the men from the women. The latter generally sit at a separate table, and make believe to be working at a piece of embroidery, which they hold in their hands. Meanwhile the men collect in another part of the salon, talk politics, or more frequently about cotton, or play. A magic power seems to keep the men apart from the women, and it is seldom that any one, excepting perhaps a father, ventures to break the spell. This is indeed the very way to make society as intolerable as possible. The reason of this custom is that most of the young men are clerks, and will not or cannot forget even in company the respect due to their employer, to Madame, and to the Demoiselles. Besides, they are mostly foreigners, whose residence at Havre is but temporary. The principals may, therefore, be afraid lest connections should be formed between the young people which would lead to nothing. Be the cause what it may, the effect is as tiresome as possible.

A compensation for such parties of the *monde comme il faut* is to be found here and there in the circle of a family which is independent enough to defy the fashion. I believe that there are not many such, and I esteem myself fortunate to have found in the house of a friend of mine an excellent man, two amiable females, and unsophisticated, childlike children, whose hearts and minds understand and speak the language of nature.

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Havre—arts—sciences—what dissonances ! Only the first of these notes agrees with the fundamental note—cotton ; while the other two give unresolvable sevenths, or other such discords.

But even to the desert island the bird of passage occasionally carries the seed of some good fruit, and thus an ear of corn, perhaps, is found springing up amidst the weeds. This is what I am now about to treat of.

There is in Havre a Literary Society, if you choose to call it so. Its title is *Société havraise d'études diverses*. The number of its regular members amounts to twenty-two, that of its correspondents to twenty-one. It meets twice a month, when papers by different members, and reports on books sent to it, are read. This society publishes annually a kind of summary of its proceedings. From these summaries we see that the society deserves its appellation, for the papers noticed in them are taken quite at random, so that in the report you are carried from Havre to Rouen, perhaps to Poland, or even among the Celts, hear the language of the philosophers on public instruction, morals, and the influence of manufactures upon them ; then again a defence of Genesis, remarks on the barometer, the cholera, phrenology, small-pox ; by and by a *statistique médicale* of Havre ; and we learn that the society, in order not to be behind the age, has its poets, who sometimes philosophize in verse, at others compose lyrics, and, lastly, write fables into the bargain.

It is not my intention to enter here into details,

still less to criticise ; for the society seems, notwithstanding the demi-publicity which it gives to its proceedings, to be nothing more than a circle of friends, who wish, on the evenings when they meet, to forget, for a few hours, trade, the school, the sick-room, the hospital, and the law-court. Among the papers, however, there are some which, to judge from a recent report, are of some importance, among others, one by M. Poulain, a Protestant minister, on the concordance of Genesis with the latest discoveries in natural history, and especially the observations of Cuvier.

The traders are in a minority in the society (nine members), and this may perhaps explain how it has happened that the majority has expressed itself very emphatically against the brutalizing of youth in manufactories. At times, however, the spirit of trade manifests itself, as in a debate in which the question was very seriously discussed, whether it is not a misfortune that public instruction should be so widely extended as it is at present ; and, to the honour of the majority of the society be it said, this opinion was decidedly rejected.

The small number of the members in general, and of traders in particular, shows how little the need of food for the mind is felt in Havre. Those who do seek it, who founded this society — it is but a few years old — deserve so much the more praise.

On the intellectual life of the town it exercises no influence. Neither, indeed, does this appear to be its object ; and therein precisely lies its sentence.

Such a society is but a sort of pastime when it has no higher aim than amusement, when it does not propose a goal to itself, and strive to attain it ; and I really think that in the province, and in Havre in particular, it would not be difficult to find an object worthy of the efforts of clever men.

With this *société havraise* I have mentioned nearly all the institutions for the promotion of science that exist in Havre, if I add to it the public library. It consists of many thousand volumes, collected from the convents in the environs. Respecting the history of the town and of Normandy, it contains no works of any importance, but others are to be procured by degrees. I have rarely met with a more kind and courteous librarian than that of Havre — he used frequently to hand round his snuff-box to all the readers in turn — but unfortunately he has not yet been able to make a complete catalogue of the books under his care, so that a full half of the treasures possessed by the library still lies buried there. It is open every day, Sunday excepted, from ten till four, has a convenient reading-room, warmed in winter, in which I have seen at times seven or eight readers, six of them, perhaps, constant visitors, but who came less frequently when there was no occasion to keep a fire.

I made acquaintance with but few of the authors resident here. M. Corbière, editor of the *Journal du Havre*, is celebrated for his naval novels. One of these I have read here. It is entitled *Le Banian*, and the Banian is a Robert Macaire, who goes

abroad, plays his part in the colonies as well as on the continent, has two or three narrow escapes from the gallows, makes a great deal of money, changes his name, returns to France, is elected deputy, and is on the point of marrying a countess, when he is unmasked, retires overwhelmed with disgrace, and at length dies miserably as a *mouchard*. The incidents in this novel, the situations, complications, and developments, the descriptions of various kinds of sea-fish, and the characters, display talent; and if M. Corbière resided in Paris, he would probably act a part in the literature of the day. At present, under the restrictive influence of the capital, which allows him only a kind of passive activity, he is the translator of the land language and land events of Paris into the sea language and sea events of a voyage to the colonies, and of a residence there. The influence of the capital on all intellectual exertion in the country has the effect of not only preventing it from attaining the eminence that it deserves, but of keeping it in continual dependence. Fashion obliges the provinces to dance to the tune that is played in Paris, and thus you hear in the country nothing but the echo of what is going forward in Paris. The majority of the writers in the provinces, unless they possess very strong minds, capable of defying prejudice and custom, and carrying through this defiance, are forced to pay adoration to Paris; they produce nothing original, nothing new, and what they have imagined and written, agreeably to the ideas and form current in the capital, is generally a year

or so too late, as is the case with the fashions followed in Havre and Bordeaux long after they have been superseded by newer ones in Paris.

The works of M. Morlents, editor of the *Revue du Havre*, consist of several small books of travels, which are very unpretending, and to which, for that reason, justice is the more readily done. In point of style and matter, they belong to the better class of travels that one meets with in France.

A *reunion d'honneur de lettres* has been publishing for some time *Archives du Havre, recueil commercial, scientifique, et littéraire*. The numbers that have hitherto appeared afford no reason to expect from it any thing original and independent, though individual articles are not without interest. Neither does any plan seem to have been laid down for this undertaking, for, in the introduction, after a variety of stilted phrases, the editor contents himself with saying that the *Archives du Havre seront celles du progrès*, which is saying as good as nothing, since he takes good care not to tell us what he means by *progrès*.

Such are the scientific ears of corn which some bird of passage has dropped on this desert island.

As to art, I conceived that it was an utter stranger in this country, until I accidentally discovered a painter of whom I shall take more particular notice.

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I walked one day along the foot of the Hève, admiring the picturesque grouping of the riven rocks,

and the beautiful and ever-varying prospects of the sea and the town. Here and there a silent fisherman was seen pursuing his occupation in the breakers of the gradually rising flood. Instead of the bustle of the town, I was here surrounded, a league from Havre, by an absolute solitude.

A young man on the shore excited my curiosity. He was standing at a spot where the waves were breaking with a loud noise against two large fragments of rock, and flinging their water, often to the height of a man, into the air. With every advancing wave I saw him bend forward as though to impart to it some secret, and, when it had covered him with its spray, recede a step or two, and, as if it had answered him, write down something upon a paper which he held in his hand. I watched him with astonishment, and it almost seemed as if the story of our forefathers, concerning the love of a knight for a sea-nymph, was re-acting before my face. But I soon began to view the matter with a more prosaic eye, and then my lover of the sea-nymph appeared to me to be some poor fellow who had lost his wits. But for this interpretation the whole affair was too monotonous, and lasted too long. I descended to the beach, and soon stood unperceived behind my knight or lunatic. A fresh wave, which he had again watched in silence with eager looks, obliged him to fall back a few paces, and, when he approached nearer to me, I observed that he looked at his paper, and, uttering a *Ce n'est pas cela!* in a tone of dissatisfaction, flung it away, and



took another piece from his pocket. I picked up the love-letter to the sea-nymph, and found upon it a drawing in pencil representing the play of the waves in a most admirable manner. It was neither more nor less than a painter, who was here studying and striving to seize the mysteries of the sea.

Civilization oft interposes like a partition wall between men. In Paris, our neighbour in the next room long remains a stranger to us; in a small town people know more of one another; in a village all the inhabitants are relations; and two persons meeting in a desert would instantly shake each other by the hand as cordially as if they were brothers. We, that is to say the painter and I, at the foot of the Hève, on the beach, with the cliff behind and the sea before us, were in a sort of desert, and so we had no need of any particular introduction in order to make acquaintance. After a few questions and answers, the conversation had got into the best possible train. The young painter—he might be about twenty-eight—laughed heartily when I confessed that, misled by the extraordinary way in which he watched the breaking of the waves, I had at the first moment doubted the soundness of his intellects; and told me that the fishermen and labourers had frequently formed the same opinion of him. “For that reason,” continued he, “I am obliged to come so far. It is frequently the case that I am amply compensated for my walk, as I have been just now at this spot, where I have been observing for several days past a most peculiar effect of the breaking of

the waves, without having succeeded in seizing and making myself master of the secret." And I actually perceived, when he pointed it out to me, that the sea, as often as it rushed against the two blocks, broke into double waves, and, dashing together on two sides, formed a sort of arch, such as I had never before observed. The painter's sketch showed me, in the first place, how difficult it is to represent this sport of Nature, and, in the second, that I was talking to one who was by no means a novice in his art. After he had kindly invited me to call upon him, and given me his address, I left him alone, that I might not disturb him further in his studies.

In the evening I asked one of my acquaintance, who had a great deal to say about the pictures in the exhibition in Paris, whether he knew Drouin the painter. He replied that some time ago he had known a house-painter of that name, and he had heard that this man actually occupied himself in painting ships for the captains. This somewhat cooled the enthusiasm excited by the sketches and the modest yet manly bearing of the young painter, which had given me a tolerably high opinion of his professional abilities. Nevertheless, on the following day I sought out my new acquaintance.

I was obliged to ascend to the second floor of a third-rate house, where a plainly-dressed young woman, who could scarcely have been brought up in the town, opened the door to me, and ushered me into a small neat apartment. Presently the painter made his appearance in a green linen blouse,

differing from those worn by painters in Paris in this particular only, that it was not stained in a hundred places with colours and oil, but was perfectly clean. After the first salutations, he ushered me into another room, where, as he said, he had installed his youngest child; but this child was a little giant, who already seemed able in his cradle to strangle the serpents of envy and jealousy.

Never, I must confess, had I yet seen the sea so portrayed as here in a picture by the *ci-devant* house-painter. The piece was tolerably large, the largest that Drouin had hitherto painted, five feet wide, and four high. It represents the saving of the Triton steamer, stranded some years ago in the breakers off Havre. The colour of the skeleton of a ship on the stocks in the fore-ground is rather wooden; the beach has the same fault; it is too natural. The artist has not considered that in painting trees one must not paint leaves, and that the beach should be represented as a whole, and not as a vast mass of single pebbles. But all these are faults that are corrected in time, and Drouin will correct them, for in his picture are displayed, where the sea begins, a life, a truth, a study of Nature, such as I have never yet met with in any marine piece of any master's. Many have attempted to represent the sea in a storm; but the waves are in general real mountains, dense and heavy. Drouin, on the contrary, has found out the art of giving them all their elasticity, their play, their transparency, their infinite diversity. The waves

dance in his picture, as on the sea, and, while you look at the piece, you fancy that you hear the exultations into which they break forth whenever they approach the shore. I think I am not saying too much if I predict that Drouin, whose name has never yet been publicly mentioned, will be in ten years the first marine painter of France.

After I had long contemplated the picture, and he had shown me a few smaller landscapes and cattle-pieces, I asked him, I can scarcely tell why, whether Drouin the house-painter was perhaps his father. He replied, laughing: — “ Yes, if you choose to call him so, for he brought me up, supported, and took care of me, and furnished me with the means of becoming a painter, supposing that I ever shall be one. But you might misunderstand me: the house-painter stands before you. Poor, and without resources, I chose this trade, because I hoped to find time for the study of the art of painting, which has been my passion from my earliest youth.” He then related to me, in the most natural and unaffected manner, how he had lost his father when he was only twelve years old, and thenceforward been obliged to work to support himself and a sick mother. His inclination wavered between the sea and painting, and so he went out at first as cabin-boy, was three years at sea, and during that time made drawings, such as they were, of ships, the sea, churches, and villages, without having ever received any instruction. At last his fondness for painting gained the upper hand; he left the ship,

and went to a house-painter in Rouen, where he soon gained a scanty subsistence, and found time besides to take lessons in drawing. But house-painting was his only school in the art, and in regard to the theory of colours he was entirely his own master. His pictures show traces of this self-instruction ; for, admirable as they are in the main point, they want what the French painters term *le chicque*. His longing to be near the sea soon carried him back to Havre, and here he rose step by step, at first practising in water-colours, and then making for captains and merchants portraits of their children — for such to them are their ships, to which their hearts are often more strongly attached than to their real offspring—that they might have them continually before their eyes ; lastly, painting in oil ; and now he stands — as the fact that the amateurs of Havre pay pretty high prices for his pieces, sufficiently proves to those who know any thing of the people of that town—in the vestibule of the temple, where the goddess of Art will not deny the palm to one initiated into it by Nature herself. He will be frequently talked of when he has once broken the ice in which the country envelops every genius in France, when he has once attracted notice in Paris.

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I had been told one day that a musical mass would be performed in Notre Dame. Since I have been in France, the term musical mass always produces the same effect upon me as the *ranz des vaches*



upon a Swiss. I am reminded of the grand and deeply-impressive masses that I have heard in the cathedral of Cologne, and an unbroken series of the most beautiful and sublime recollections passes before my mind. I determined to attend the mass, though I knew beforehand that, from the present state of music in the provinces of France, nothing very excellent was to be expected.

My expectations were surpassed, but, instead of a treat, I received a lesson; for this musical mass sufficed to explain to me at once as clearly as possible the state of religion in France and the spirit of the French and Havre clergy. The church music, the musical mass, was, namely, military or ball music. There is the key to the enigma. And this military church music, with picoli, cornet and piston, trumpets, cymbals, and great drum, played most complacently the ballet music of the scene of the *Pré aux clercs* in Meyerbeer's *Huguenots*, and then a number of galopades and quadrilles by Auber, Julien, and Musard. And they played not amiss, those gallant regimental musicians; and when, just before the elevation of the host, when a quadrille, which I had heard several times at Musard's, and which had pleased me much, was performed, all my fingers itched, and the devil himself tempted me to applaud with all my might, and to shout *Bis! bis!* (encore! encore!) I had some special reasons which deterred me. But the mockery was atrocious, and the dealers in the temple, whom Christ drove out in his just indignation, were a mere



bagatelle, not worth mentioning, in comparison with this military band and these quadrilles. The music seemed to have the same effect upon the legs of the majority of the pious auditors that it had upon my hands; they moved according to the time, and swayed their heads and their bodies to and fro. Was it not the same dances, the same music, which were played a few weeks before at the balls, to which they had danced with such glee, with which were associated the recollections of so many a delightful hour, so many a love-intrigue, so many a tricked husband, with whose fairer half an assignation might be made in whispers during the dance? O! this sacred military music! I became at last quite wicked, and I could have begged the devil's pardon for all the sins that I had ever abstained from committing.

I am not one of those who take offence at the gravity with which the Jewish religion and its offspring, Christianity, have surrounded the idea of God. But, let it not be supposed, by any means, that I participate in the notions of those who regard this world as necessarily a vale of tears, a purgatory in which man must be duly purified before he can be admitted into heaven. The priests of all ages have, with rare exceptions, made an idol of God, a laughing or a cursing idol, according as the one or the other best suited their purpose.

With the idea of a one only God, this God must necessarily become more grave, more sublime, more elevating, and, whoever recognizes this one God in

Nature, or above it, must give this gravity to his divine worship, or he proves that he has no comprehension, not even any feeling, of his own creed. But this is a point which I had no intention to touch upon. The priests in France are Catholics, and none of the most tolerant. And then military music, quadrilles, &c., in church !

A single mass of this kind must be quite sufficient to characterize the religious state of a nation and its clergy. I often heard talk in Paris about a sort of re-awakening of the religious feeling in the people, and I will not question the fact itself. A people without religious feeling would necessarily sink through the grossest materialism into a selfishness, that must dissolve all human ties, that knows neither God nor state, neither society nor family, neither love nor fellow-feeling, and is intent solely on its own gratification. Such a people must perish ; and the day when the last spark of its religious feeling expired, would be the day of its death. In France, religion, religious feelings, belief in God and in virtue, had been bound to a certain ceremonial, the mind chained to a form, and thus the ark of the covenant had become God himself. But the priests, who should have watched over that ark, turned it into a coffer, into which they put their treasures. The deception could not be kept up for ever ; bold innovators soon laid hold of the ark, shook it, and then the people heard that the God whom they were required to adore was no other than gold and precious stones ; they drove away the

guardians of the ark, broke open the money-chest, and divided the treasures among themselves. In many, who, as they had been taught, regarded the ark as God, their belief in God was destroyed along with it. And then ensued a period of infidelity, which still acts upon the mass, the reflecting part, at least, of the French people. But this dreary time could not last, and there is no doubt that at this day the majority of the French feel the need of religion, the need of a belief in God, in justice, and in virtue, deeply, if but vaguely. But they are much mistaken, who, on this account, suppose that some day or other they will again acknowledge the shattered ark for their God.

The vague, undefined feeling of the need of a higher point of support for man led many of the French back to the Church, and what in a great number was a want became for a still greater a fashion. Were the French clergy capable of appreciating this state of things, of paying homage to the wants of the time, and placing themselves in unison with the enlightenment of the age, they might at this moment effect infinite good.

Instead of this, however, they are making a sort of speculation of that feeling, and striving to make it as profitable as possible. They do homage to fashion, give concerts in the churches, turn the temple into a playhouse! and why not? Is not the speculation of Messrs. Musard and Julien one of the best in the capital? As you give twenty sous for admission to their concerts, so you give but two

or four at church, and, after the regimental trumpeters are paid, something handsome is left for the *fabrique*, as the exchequer of the church is here called. But precisely in this calculation is involved the condemnation of the calculators: for you perceive in it, and still more in the means adopted to fill the churches, that they feel not the least concern about the spirit, but merely seek to tickle the senses, of their flocks, that they have no notion of what is stirring among the people, and that they follow the fashion only to make a profit by it. In the capital, all this appeared much less hateful to me, for there one is accustomed to see egotism displayed in its grossest form; but the prevalence of similar practices in the provinces is a proof that it is not the effect of individual aberration, but of a system which is acted upon, unless that simpler, sheepish virtue, which follows whithersoever the bell-wether leads, be the cause of these military music masses.

It was long since any thing had so grievously revolted my inmost soul as this downright mockery of all that is most sacred. I could not get rid the whole day of the impression which this mass had made upon me, and even a walk on the pier, which the weather that day half allowed me to take, failed to efface it.

A visit which I paid towards evening led me into a different train of ideas. France is certainly approaching a moral transformation. The most infallible herald and forerunner of such a change is invariably the demoralisation of the most influential

part of society. I think my word will be taken for the truth of this assertion, but whoever doubts it may seek evidence to the point in history ; it may be found without difficulty. But in France the predominant class of society, the higher bourgeoisie, the big wigs of the *juste milieu*, are as corrupt as it is possible to be. The chamber of deputies, its legitimate representative, is actuated solely by the basest self-interest. The appointment of a son or a cousin, the grant of a contract, a privilege, a monopoly, an invitation to a ball at court, and the riband of an order for the wealthy, are sufficient in most cases to secure a majority. A ministry has a majority for or against it, according as it is supposed to possess stability, or, in other words, to have time to fulfil its promises. The mass of the electors is no better, or they would have made a better choice. All this may be perceived still more clearly when we consider what means are employed and suffice in most places to secure the election of the ministerial deputies. In regard to the press, which is likewise a power in modern France, matters are still worse. People know here the fixed price of a laudatory article, of a feuilleton by J. J. and others, just as well as that of a pair of gloves or a nightcap. The press is a real market of consciences, and whoever knows the price and is able to pay it may command those independent gentlemen, with few, and therefore the more honourable, exceptions. Robert Macaire ! — yes, he is the hero of the day, and the



truest, the most exquisite type, of the society at present existing in France.

If you would find in France virtue and truth, disinterestedness and self-denial, philanthropy and generosity, you must in general descend to the depths of society, or rather ascend to the third or fourth floor, or to the very garrets. Scarcely any where else do you find people worthy of the name of men. On my first visit to Havre, I had lodged for some months in the second floor of a modest house, with a family for which I conceived such a regard that I could not deny myself the pleasure of calling to see them. The father is overseer of the warehouse of an extensive merchant, and the mother such a one as I used to think was not to be found out of my own country. She worked, and contrived all day, from early in the morning till late at night, to be able to support, bring up, and educate her numerous family, eight fine children, out of her husband's scanty salary. Here I was treated just like one of the family, and once when I was unwell the good mother almost neglected her own children to attend to me. I lived in a room separated merely by a wainscot partition from the whole family, and could hear almost every word that was said in the kitchen, which was their usual abode; never did I hear a cross word between husband and wife, and only at times the earnest and emphatic reproofs of the mother to her children when they had done any thing amiss. Many children are a blessing to a house, says a German proverb, and I was glad



for once to see it verified ; for in such a circle of children well brought up, every one is really a blessing of God.

How delighted these good folks were to see me again, and what a treat it was to me to witness their joy ! The mother told me that they often talked about me, and I could assure her that I often thought of them. She regretted that her room was just then let, and I was equally sorry for it. She then related that it had been unoccupied for nearly six months, which I thought extraordinary, considering the overflowing population of Havre. But the reason why this had been the case characterises the good woman and also the town ; for it was only because all lodgers insisted on being *free* in their own room, which means, in plain English, that they would not comply with the condition not to bring home with them companions of the other sex, that she declined letting it, and chose rather to keep it empty. "The lot of my children is in the hands of God," said she : "I have done all I could to bring them up to be good and virtuous ; and if Heaven should decree otherwise, I am resolved not to have to reproach myself with having permitted them to witness bad examples before my own face, and in my own abode." Such a scruple may perhaps appear overstrained even here, but in France it would certainly be thought so by many. But I must confess that it did my heart good, and Providence will, I trust, so order it that she shall not have made the sacrifice, and a great one for her, of some hundred francs, to no purpose.

I had staid so long at my former landlady's that when I reached the theatre a little vaudeville was nearly over. In the interval that elapsed before the commencement of the next piece, I had opportunity to look about me at the house and the audience. The former is built and arranged upon the plan of the Parisian houses, so that it would not be worth while to describe it. The audience was more interesting. Nearly the whole of the pit was occupied by sailors, with perhaps a sprinkle of artisans. In the second tier of boxes were seated chiefly tradesmen's wives and daughters; here and there, in the first tier, was to be seen a lady of the *monde comme il faut*; and lastly the gallery was filled with servants and prostitutes. There was a great deal of noise and fun between the acts. The sailors cracked coarse jokes, whistled, drummed, shouted, when they became impatient. A quarrel took place, and nothing but a challenge *en bonne ordre* put an end to the disturbance in the theatre itself; for then the adversaries, with a dozen of their companions, left the house to settle the affair with such weapons as they had brought into the world with them.

At length commenced the introduction to the *Postillon de Longjumeau*, for that was the piece I was destined to hear to-day. Of the vapid dances to this music, which they call an opera, I shall say nothing, unless that if it is vapid in Paris, it is intolerable here, for it had such a seasoning of dissonances, of false notes, of real wailings, which they are here pleased to call choruses, that it requires a tympanum

like an ass's hide or an ear like that of the sailor's accustomed to the howling of the wind among the rigging, to take the least pleasure in it. Had not the postillion been so exceedingly amusing, my firm determination to stay till the conclusion would certainly have been shaken. But he was so droll as to make amends for all the torment I had to endure. Four feet high and full as much in circumference, this punchy, rubicund little fellow stood beside his mistress, or strutted about like a marshal in the palmy days of Versailles, and sang like a caged nightingale a languishing song, setting forth how irresistible he was, and his good luck with the sex. Irresistible he was indeed, this miniature Falstaff, in postillion's jacket, and I could not help being diverted in spite of my teeth, and laughing heartily, which seemed to scandalize not a little the regular frequenters of the theatre. But enough of him !

More lively scenes are sometimes witnessed in the theatre of Havre. The public is erected into a judge competent to decide on the merits of every new actor or actress that comes out. Whistling signifies " We will not have him ;" clapping of hands means, " We are satisfied with him." The commissary of police at length takes the place of the goddess of justice, balances the voices, and decides in the first instance whether the candidate shall be accepted or rejected. Such a popular court is never held at Havre without some dramatic catastrophe. The sailors never fail to take part in the decision, and when they are in the humour to

whistle, it is rather dangerous for any one near them to applaud; for the usual argument, a blow from the hard fist of one of these fellows, is not to be despised. A debut seldom takes place at Havre without a few such weighty arguments; a general row frequently ensues, and then the commissary of police, throwing away the balance of justice, resumes his proper character, draws his sword, calls the bayonets to his assistance, drives friend and foe out of the theatre, and finishes with taking a dozen of the disturbers of the peace, as they are then called, *au violon*. Those who have been drubbed mostly pay the piper.

In Havre, the sailors and the clerks are the umpires. But even if there were more competent judges to pronounce a decision, the theatre of Havre would not be much better, for the traders have other business to mind than to concern themselves about the arts, and besides, Havre is a French provincial town. All science, all art, all the higher and greater interests, have gradually concentrated themselves in Paris, and life in the provinces is thus become a life of downright labour or indulgence. Havre is one of the first commercial towns in Europe, and scarcely a trace of social life on a large scale, of art or science, is to be found in it. The regular theatre at Havre is worse than many strolling companies in other countries, and it is only when from time to time a performer comes from Paris that you can give yourself a real treat, when the Havre actors only form the more harsh a contrast and

manifest the more clearly the absence of all art in the province.

On this occasion, after the play, a few visitors were introduced to the public : some Arabs, who, a few weeks before, had amused Paris to satiety, exhibited their tricks. You cannot help admiring the strength and elasticity of these people, and they alone are sufficient to show what trouble it will cost to subdue a nation that makes such tricks a pastime. But the most interesting thing to me was the youngest child of this Arabian family. The limb and neck breaking feats and tricks performed by this boy, touched me deeply, for he had such a lovely, mild, angelic countenance, that he was certainly formed for something else than a conjuror. Instead of sending civilization to the Arabs in cartouch-boxes, a hundred such children brought up by their parents in Europe, and instructed in our arts and sciences, would very soon civilize all Africa. But in our days the high and mighty are acquainted with but one medium of civilization — *les bajonettes intelligentes*.

But hold ! I have got out of the theatre without scarcely knowing how.



## CHAPTER V.

Insipidity of Modern Travel — The Traveller advised to visit the Market-places — The *Marché des Innocents* at Paris — Pugna-  
cious spirit of the *Dames des Halles*—Market of Havre — The  
Fishermen — The marketing English — Seafaring People of  
Havre—Lamentations of the Captains over the abolition of the  
Flogging Code—Character of the Middle Class of Seafaring  
Men — The Pilots — The Common Sailors; their brutality;  
horrible instance of it—The Labouring Class — The Labourers  
in the Docks — The Calkers — The Ship-Carpenters — The  
Ordinary Artisans—Separation of the different classes of Ope-  
ratives.

THE expression — He has travelled — formerly  
meant a great deal, but has now wholly lost its  
signification. There are persons who have flown  
through most of the countries of Europe, who  
have seen all its capitals, who can talk of every  
building, every museum, every artist, and who,  
seen in the sunshine, are as new and as green in this  
world as though they had never crossed the thresh-  
old of their father's house, or at least never passed  
the boundary of their parish. The diligences, the  
iron railways, the steam-vessels, are the levers of  
this progression. People travel a great deal, and  
while they are travelling they are just as if they  
were at home. A coach accident, a *table d'hôte*



story, a reception in a salon — such are almost all the experiences of travel that people bring home with them. I praise the good old times, when a man made his will before he set out from London for Bristol, or from Bristol for Exeter. A fortnight passed on the road, in travelling a distance that is now performed in twelve hours, afforded occasion for making acquaintances, for adventures, for situations, in which it was necessary for the traveller to have all his wits about him. That was the romantic age of travelling. The breaking of a wheel on an almost impassable road was the least that could befall him, and was nothing at all in comparison with a morass in which he stuck fast, because he followed a will-o'the-wisp—a race now utterly extinct. And then only think of an attack of robbers! A classic tedium has crept into travels, I might almost say into the whole of life, since that has been driven from the boards. A simple triad — unity of place, a coach; unity of time, set down in twenty-four hours at the place of destination; unity of action, a commenced but not half spun coach intrigue — has superseded the romantic vicissitudes of chance, the bold and unlooked-for complications and developments of the good old times. Whoever yet wishes, under these circumstances, to learn something by travelling, I advise him in commercial towns to visit the Exchange, in manufacturing towns the public houses to which workmen resort, and every where the church, the school, and the market-place. There he will perhaps learn something, that is to say, if

he has brought with him eyes to see and ears to hear.

Whoever has been in Paris, and has not now and then spent an hour in the *Marché des Innocents*—the keenest irony that Chance ever devised when it stood godfather at the christening of a place—let him hold his tongue, repent him, and do penance, whenever Paris is talked of in his presence. Here you find an explanation of the epoch when the *dames des halles* played a part in history: here, too, you find an explanation of the revolution, the first, the second, the third that is to come, and of all succeeding revolutions. To a certainty the French would not have been such bold revolutionists, if the women had not shamed them at every step, and forced them to act. In the *Marché des Innocents*, I doubted not a moment that the women had first raised the flag of insurrection, though it were but one of their aprons, that they defied the bayonets, and, alone and unarmed, confronted the power of a king. For here you every hour see women, in contempt of the armed force and of all the authority of an important officer of the police, displaying a boldness of which scarcely a conception can be formed in any other country, and which even in France might shame all the other sex. In Paris I have often seen men quarrel and abuse one another for half an hour together, without proceeding to any manual demonstration; but here, in the *Marché des Innocents*, I have occasionally heard women bandy abusive epithets, but only in fun, though, as soon

as it changed to earnest, the battle was well nigh over before I knew that it had begun. Two market women quarrelled one day; I looked another way for a moment, and, when I turned my eyes again to them, behold, one had made a weapon of her wooden shoe, the other of a potato-measure, and both were *hors de combat* from the wounds which they had mutually inflicted in a couple of seconds. The people are the best observers of the people, and they write down in sharp characters the results of their observations in a proverb, in a popular witticism, and thus they say in France: *Les hommes se disputent, les femmes se battent*. Here is abundant matter for philosophizing. I shall merely add — whoever would study the character of the people, let him not miss a market day.

Havre is a commercial town, and, moreover, a sea-port. Its character is comprehended in these two words. Without trade and without the sea, the town would not even exist; and, without the traders and the seafaring people, the rest of the inhabitants of Havre would not be worth mentioning. In the market-place this is as clear as possible. All the attendants of the market, excepting the fishermen, who go thither very early in the morning to sell the booty which they have just brought in, are the most ordinary, every-day creatures that can be conceived; and, often as I have made the tour of the market, much as I have been interested by the variety of fruit, native and foreign, offered for sale by commerce and agriculture, by the inviting culi-

nary vegetables, by the manifold and extraordinary productions of the sea, so little have I been attracted by the people, notwithstanding their Norman costumes, notwithstanding the high helmet-shaped *cauchoise* (cap) of the women. They were all quiet, prosaic buyers and sellers, and I scarcely recollect to have ever seen a quarrel among them, or heard a smart thing said by any of them.

There were but two phenomena in the market that struck me. In the first place, the said fishermen. In the morning, before the regular market begins, they come heavily laden with large flat baskets, in which they bring their fish and shell-fish for sale. A particular person, appointed as it appears by law, frequently acts as salesman; he rings a bell to call the buyers together: but I have often seen the fishermen transact the business in person, and in this matter they always showed themselves worthy of their element and profession. They are accustomed to defy the tempest, to meet it calmly and silently; so, too, they expose their goods, tell the price with one word, let the retail-dealers of both sexes collected around find as much fault as they please with it, and outbid one another, without taking the least notice of the tempest of tongues, till the sum is reached which they consider reasonable, when they deliver their goods, pocket the money, and quietly go their way.

A second not uninteresting phenomenon at the market is that of the English who come to buy. I have often been told, or I have often read, that no



people are so particular about the supply of their table as the English, and I readily believe it, to judge from those who are seen marketing here. With a caution, with a scrutinizing look, that would do honour to the most fastidious gourmand, they examine every cauliflower, every fish. They go regularly through the book that lies open before them, compare the different readings, and, after mature consideration, decide in favour of the turbot on the left, or the soles on the right hand side of the fish-table. How many hours of uneasy digestion must it have cost them to attain this skill. These English are the representatives of a small colony of military and naval officers living here upon half-pay, or of tradesmen who have retired from business with the savings of twenty years. God bless their studies !

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The seafaring people form a not inconsiderable class of the inhabitants of Havre. The captains and lieutenants of ships form its aristocracy, the mates, pilots, and fishermen the middle class, and the common sailors the populace, the *canaille*.

The captains have here a particular society, a *Cercle des Capitaines*, in which you meet with a cordial welcome when you are introduced by one of the members. Among this class of seafaring men you find many possessing vigorous minds, often extensive information, and who have of course seen a great deal of the world, but many also who are rude

and uncultivated. It must certainly wound every feeling heart to hear how these men talk of the sailors, and to find that none of them are acquainted with any other means of keeping their crew in order but a rope's end. In the year 1830, ideas more worthy of man prevailed for a few weeks in France, and in consequence the old sea-code, the ordinances of which harmonized with these sentiments of the captains, was abolished. Since that time they are forbidden to strike the men ; but, when the captains come upon this subject, you soon perceive that they account it a sort of heroism to assert their omnipotence in a few sound thumps, in spite of the law. At times, too, you hear complaints that, in consequence of the abolition of this punishment, the sailors are already beginning to regard blows as degrading, and to take the part of their maltreated comrades. The captains are mostly petty pachas, who know no law but their own will. At sea this arbitrary power may sometimes be necessary, but to a certainty it has often been abused. I recollect a story of a captain having consigned to the hold a young man who was paying court at the same time with himself to a handsome female passenger, in order to get rid of a troublesome rival, who had thus to perform the greater part of the voyage in the silent company of bales of coffee and hogsheads of sugar ; till, on reaching land, a few shots which they exchanged, and a wound which the captain received in the arm, restored things to an equilibrium.

The want of a naval code, or rather of a flogging



code, is the everlasting complaint of the ship-captains of Havre ; and most assuredly not a week passes but the *Journal du Havre*, conducted, as I have already observed, by Corbière, himself a clever seaman, echoes this complaint. All seamen agree that, without flogging, nothing is to be done with the sailors. Almost all the military officers thought the same in regard to the soldiers, and the House of Lords in England is still of the same opinion, though experience in France and Germany has proved the contrary. It is true that a substitute must be found for corporal punishment ; it is true that the sailors themselves must first be unbrutalized ; and *that* time will arrive, when humanity has learned to interpose an energetic word with the framers of new laws.

The legal abolition of flogging, however, has already operated very beneficially, as I have just remarked. The low moral step on which the sailors stand can alone render this punishment necessary ; but when the sailors are once humanized by education and instruction, which have hitherto been denied them, they will themselves take good care to be treated as men. And this is by no means impossible, nay, it would be easy, if governments would establish naval schools, as many of them have established military schools ; if they were no longer to permit raw boys, as well as the older sailors, to squander on shore what they have been earning at sea. Let such schools for sailors, in which every ship-boy, while on shore, should daily receive instruction for several hours in reading, writing, and arithmetic, subsist for

but ten years, and the whole profession would be changed. It is only by attacking at its root the brutality of these men, consigned without protection to an almost savage state, that a reform is possible. The outcry for a flogging code is a proof that people see the evil without caring about its source, without thinking of setting about curing it from within.

The middle class of the seafaring people is, as in all others, the kernel of the whole. You often find among the masters, mates, pilots, and fishermen, who compose it, cleverer men than in any other profession. The reader need not take my word for it; let him only turn to the novels by Cooper and other well known naval men. They have run the round of vice and brutality without sinking, and this of itself is a proof of their inward worth. Most of them are ignorant in regard to knowledge acquired at school; few of them can read or write tolerably; on the other hand, they have seen much in their peregrinations, and they have collected a store of practical information, such as is not often to be met with in any other condition. They have, moreover, a feeling, a consciousness, of their manhood, a boldness that is to be acquired only in daily conflict with a mighty element; they are mostly religious, for they have often enough experienced that the strength of man is but as a child's ball in the hand of excited Nature. I have made acquaintance here with a mate and several boatswains, and have no scruple to confess that I should often enough prefer their society to that of a Paris *salon* where the most eminent of

the literary men of the day are assembled. I recollect a circumstance which proves the delicacy of feeling that these tars frequently possess. One of my acquaintance dined here regularly at the same table with several mates and boatswains. The name of one of the latter was Joseph. One day, when my friend had invited me, an altercation arose during dinner between Joseph and a tradesman. The latter had affronted Joseph, I do not recollect how; the seaman, vehemently excited, told him some home truths, rose from his seat, and, by way of clenching his concluding asseveration, struck the table so violently with his sledge-hammer of a fist, as to make all the glasses dance again. He then abruptly withdrew, as though sensible that he had forgotten himself, at least in regard to the other persons present. This was the only time that I ever witnessed any thing of the kind at this table, where I often dined, and where frank cordiality and hearty jokes usually prevailed; and I commended in my own mind that delicacy which had induced the excited seaman to withdraw. But I was still more surprised when, on leaving the house in about an hour, Joseph, who seemed to have been waiting for me, begged me to step aside with him. He declared that he was extremely sorry that he had not been able to control his feelings, and that so he had offended us, and very penitently begged my pardon.

The pilots and fishermen form a particular section of the seafaring class. The former are a distinct body of government servants, appointed to

steer vessels into and out of port, and to hasten to their assistance in storms, amidst the most awful dangers. And their courage urges them still more than their duty, be the peril ever so imminent, to defy the tempest in their small barks, and to fly to the succour of those who are on the brink of destruction. I might call them the priests of the sea, who repair to the dying, not to give them the last blessing, but to inspire them with courage and confidence, but to rescue them at the hazard of their own lives from the cold hand of death, already extended to seize his affrighted prey.

The pilots and fishermen are the most moral and the soundest in body and mind of the whole seafaring class. The reason is simply this—they have families. They are fathers, sons, brothers, and return almost daily to their homes. If any one can doubt the high moral effect of a family, let him but come hither, and compare these pilots and fishermen with the rest of the seamen. Both classes have the like occupation, the like education, live upon the same element, under the same influences, and yet are totally different in their nature: for the family is the temple of morality in this world; here is deposited the germ that is some day to produce sound fruit, and none but the unloving or the surfeited with love can dare to violate this sanctuary.

The sailors are the populace of the seafaring class, I have said the *canaille*, not because I consider populace and *canaille* as synonymous, but because the sailors have really sunk into *canaille*. I doubt



whether there is any lower step on the scale of humanity than that on which the common sailor stands. Most of them are small, stunted, weakly-looking figures. At the first glance you read in the pale features of these unfortunate men, animated only by the glare of a wild eye, the frightful desolation that prevails within. Their life is the most grievous punishment that could possibly be devised ; and wo to those who have it in their power to help here, and neglect to help ! Every thing concurs to annihilate in these men the better part of man. Without education, without instruction, the boy goes to sea, and enters the school of the grossest depravity. Then his life is divided into two halves ; at sea he is exposed to all sorts of privations, and, at the same time, to the most cruel temptations to vice, and often to the brutality of a captain or mate. On shore, he enters upon a life which has for him neither society nor family ; incessant labour for many months is succeeded by as long a period of idleness. These are transitions from which even the tried man might not always come off victorious. On their arrival in port, the sailors receive the sum which they have earned in four, six, twelve, and often more months at sea, and with this money they rush into the arms of vice, till they have spent the last farthing.

I have seen some of them, brutes, or what is worse, brutalized men, on whose haggard features satiety was legibly inscribed, and who nevertheless plunged with mad eagerness into new indulgences. I have witnessed here scenes that made my hair stand on

sider themselves, as the insurrections in Paris and Lyons have sufficiently proved, as oppressed, defrauded of their right. They demand a better position, and it is in the nature of things that every one who demands something better than what is allotted to him must and will strive above all things to show that he is worthy of what is better. This is the key to the secret of the oppressed, of all oppositions against oppression. Hence it is that every where in France you find the operatives, as a class, possessed with a spirit aspiring to something higher, and the majority of them less selfish, less immoral, than those whom they particularly charge with egotism and immorality. Besides, labour of itself has a tendency to moralize, inasmuch as it preserves from excesses.

The labouring class in Havre is divided into two sections, the one consisting of those who are employed in the building and equipment of ships, and who work in the docks and harbours, and ordinary artisans. The labourers in the docks are extremely well off: they receive high wages, but what materially improves their condition is that, in loading and unloading the ships, there is always some perquisite or other falling to their share. Thus they are enabled to supply their families with sugar, coffee, and suchlike articles, and mostly have some of them to spare; this they sell to the retailers, and so make a little money. This the merchants call theft, and I shall not dispute the correctness of the term, but merely observe that they themselves fill



with their samples cellar and kitchen, and sell what these will not hold. Owing to this favourable position, the labourers in the docks are perfectly satisfied with their circumstances, and, consequently, with the government upon the whole.

The calkers form a distinct class, a sort of close corporation, into which they admit as apprentices none but the sons of calkers. They earn about eight francs per day ; they consider these high wages as evidence of their merit, and regard their trade, which consists chiefly in paying the seams of ships with tow, coppering their bottoms, &c., as one requiring extraordinary talent. " My Jean is an ass ; he'll never be a good calker, and so he shall be a watchmaker." Such was the expression which I once heard used by one of these men who entertain such high notions of their profession.

The ship-carpenters, sailmakers, &c., are in a less favourable position ; but they, too, are tolerably well off, and most of them contrive in time to save a little capital, as wind and weather-keep them employed all the year round. There are, nevertheless, discontented persons among them, and I became acquainted with such a one, who was a democratic legitimist, in much the same spirit as the *Gazette de France*. The influence of his circumstances upon him was obvious at the first glance. He was industrious and active, but his earnings did not permit him to procure for his children that instruction which he deemed necessary for them : out of his savings, therefore, he now and then bought a book,

studied it over-night, and what he thus learned himself he taught his children as well as he could. This is an example that frequently occurs among the labouring class in France; and I recollect how deeply I was affected when, at a distribution of the prizes given by the *Association Polytechnique*, after all the scholars had received their prizes, the name of a labourer was called, and one of the teachers informed the assembly that this man, the grey-headed father of a numerous family, unfortunately out of work, regularly attended the lectures, while his children were earning daily bread for him and his sick wife, that he might carry home and communicate what he had learned to his sons and daughters, while at their work, and in their leisure hours. These are traits, which, like straggling sunbeams, promise a better future.

The ordinary artisans in Havre are worse off than in most other towns of France, for no where in France, excepting Paris, is living so dear as in Havre, and labour is not nearly so well paid for in proportion. It is, therefore, no wonder that there should be more discontent among this class of people; and there are, indeed, many artisans in this town who entertain hostile sentiments against the government. In this class, as in every other, there are very meritorious people. But among the artisans in France theory is often carried into action, and then lays violent hands upon the laws. An instance of this kind fell within my knowledge. A journeyman cabinetmaker earned about two francs

per day, and out of this he had to find lodging, food, and clothing for himself, a wife, and five children. A man must be a conjuror to do this in Havre. My cabinetmaker argued in this way: "I am an honest working man, rise early, and go to bed late, and my hands are never idle. My conscience is, therefore, easy when I am not able to pay for what is necessary for my subsistence. As I am resolved not to get into debt with any poor shopkeeper or artisan, I always take lodgings in the house of some man who is well to do in the world, and live there till he turns me out. I have but two beds, one table, and three chairs for seven persons, and the law does not allow my goods to be seized. So my children have bread, and the landlord has only a hundred francs less at the year's end." I had not the heart to condemn him, for distress was inscribed in legible characters upon his face; but I felt that this reasoning is the first link of the chain by which Lacenaire reasoned himself to the scaffold.

But let me quote an instance of the higher aspiration of a working man of Havre. In almost every town there is now among the French operatives one or another who strives to create for himself a literary sphere of action. Thus Havre has its poet in the person of a journeyman tailor, named Contavre Kilbey, who has written a comedy in verse, entitled *Adeline ou la coquetterie*, some extracts from which have appeared in the periodical publications of Havre. If his verses are not above criticism, they



afford at least another proof how assiduously the working class in France is striving to raise itself to a higher step on the scale of society.

The operatives in Havre keep themselves more distinct than in most of the other towns of France. That the different classes of them here can be so easily distinguished, is of itself a peculiar circumstance. It is the natural consequence of the form assumed by society at this place. Almost every class has a particular interest, a particular way of life : the merchants are confined to their counting-houses and the Exchange ; the seafaring people are every where a separate body, associating together, and repelling more or less persons of other professions ; the labourers in the docks are also totally distinct from the artisans. A consequence of this state, is that much that is antiquated and exclusive, though rooted out of the institutions by the revolution, is still retained in manners and customs. They are still morally, though not legally, divided into guilds, into *corps d'état*, adhere more closely together than formerly, and celebrate each their peculiar festival every year. Last year I attended two such festivals, that of the smiths on the day of St. —, what is the name of the patron saint of the smiths ? —and that of the cabinetmakers on St. Anne's day. But these feasts deserve a particular description, for which I may perhaps find occasion hereafter.

## CHAPTER VI.

Manners and Customs of the People of Havre—Nocturnal Dance—Preliminaries to Marriage—Wedding Festivities—Customs at Funerals—Good Friday—A Quack Doctor—Comparison of his Oratory with that of the political Charlatans—Antoine, the cabinet-maker—Remarks on the French custom of putting out new-born Infants to nurse—Child-birth and Christening.

WHEN we take up the narrative of a traveller who has visited Asia, Africa, America, Australia, or even only Lapland or Turkey, we may be pretty sure that we shall find some interesting particulars relative to the manners and customs of the people. But you would look in vain for any thing of that kind in the works of our modern tourists. They have to attend to matters of much greater importance, to tell us that they dined with his excellency the count, that they had a most interesting conversation with her excellency the countess, or that they toyed with her handsome waiting-maid; that yesterday they were unwell, and therefore we have no letter from them of yesterday's date. In these illustrated works, every thing revolves round the principal person, which, like the ram among a flock of sheep, eclipses and looks down with pity on all about him. But there is another reason why travels, when they treat of civi-



lized nations, are destitute of every thing characteristic, namely the apparent or real want of character in those nations. They appear at first sight to be all cut out from one pattern, and the differences strike those only who know how to penetrate into the depths of society, which is often as difficult as to descend the shaft of a mine, and in which at times the nicely brushed coat gets sadly soiled. This may be one reason for the omission. I should like a Bedouin or a Chinese to make a tour through the countries of Europe and to give us an account of it. Nothing more is requisite than to stand totally out of the sphere of the daily usages of our somewhat monotonous quarter of the globe to make the matter appear highly interesting. The people of Havre belong to the class of civilized, that is, rounded off, blunted, filed Europeans, and at first sight all these look as much alike as one egg is to another, and it is difficult to discover any thing original, any thing characteristic.

One evening I was returning home late from an excursion in the environs, whistling a tune of my own country. On the other side of the bridge leading over the Bassin du Roi to the quarter of St. François is a tolerably spacious *place*, where the streets of the Quai des Casernes and the Quai de Marimotte, and the Rue Royale terminate. On arriving there, I was not a little surprised to find a large circle of dancers of both sexes, skipping about in a ring to the song of a woman, the *refrain* of which was always repeated in chorus by

the whole party. When the first song was finished, another female began singing another, and so on, the company continually whirling round in a circle, and the number of the dancers gradually increasing, as all who happened to pass that way, whether acquaintances or strangers, joined the ring, and sang and danced along with them. I was myself at last drawn into the sport, when a red-cheeked Norman lass offered me her hand, which I took without hesitation. The wildest mirth prevailed here, and knew neither etiquette nor affectation. Every new song, often full of coarse wit and double-entendres easily understood, gave fresh life to the dance. This lasted perhaps half an hour, when the circle was broken, and the whole motley party, hand in hand, proceeded, hopping and jigging, through the streets to another place, where the round was again formed, and the dance began afresh. Nothing but weariness and the lateness of the hour put an end to the frolic. The ring became gradually smaller, and, when my neighbour too dropped her hand from fatigue, I withdrew also. I accompanied her, and begged her to inform me what was the occasion of this merrymaking. I learned that it was the feast of some saint, whose name I forget, the patron of the bakers, who kept up these sports in the streets in honour of him, after dining and enjoying themselves, likewise in honour of him, at a public-house at Ingouville. I was told that similar festivities took place on the days of the patron-saints of other trades, and afterwards found this confirmed

by experience. I should have no difficulty in tracing back these festivals to Roman and Norman paganism ; but this inquiry I reserve for a future prize-question, and content myself for the present with remarking the purely pagan character of the sports of these bacchanalian baker lads and lasses, who, in honour of St. Somebody and his martyrdom and his abstinence, turn night into day, and divine service into a wild frolic.

Besides these festivals, I have occasionally witnessed what had the appearance of characteristic popular customs. Birth, marriage, and burial, are the three principal events of life, and they furnish nations with more especial occasion to express themselves in their peculiar way and manner. But since the march of improvement has begun to trim men here to one uniform pattern, original popular customs are becoming more rare ; but a relic of them is still left here and there.

Marriage, for instance, affords the Norman character occasion to display itself more conspicuously. A week or a fortnight before the wedding, the marriage contract is discussed. To this end, the young couple and their parents generally meet at the house of the bride. The young people may, in some cases, marry for love, but the matter is mostly a trading speculation, and the parents seldom regard it in any other light. Accordingly, the marriage contract is discussed precisely as a matter of business ; the parents mutually strive to overreach one another ; they bargain and dispute, and the

parties stand out about the value of five or ten francs. All that the bride is to receive is first specified, valued, and inserted in the contract, after the old folks have long disputed about the amount, and at last settled that point. Then comes the offer of the parents of the bridegroom, which is generally rejected as insufficient by those of the bride. They strive to obtain first a few thousand francs, then a few hundred, and, if baffled in this, at least fifty, more, till that matter too is settled between them. The conditions in case of death are then arranged, and these mostly stipulate that if either party dies before there is issue of the marriage, his or her portion shall revert to the family. The bridegroom frequently seeks to testify his affection by valuing the furniture and clothes brought by the bride—for every thing is valued\*to the last stocking—beyond their value, the consequence of which is that, in case of her death under the circumstances just mentioned, a good part of his property passes into the hands of her parents. Several instances were mentioned to me, in which these sold without mercy the property of the poor widower by public auction. Abundance of law-suits arise out of these contracts, and it would almost seem as though, in drawing them up, the contracting parties had an eye to these suits much more than to the happiness of their children, and were more intent on providing against the former than on securing the latter. I shall have occasion hereafter to notice the fondness of the Normans for litigation.



Great rejoicings are of course made at weddings. Feasting, drinking, singing, and dancing, are necessary concomitants. A pretty general French popular custom is the untying of the garter. Here in Normandy, the bride ties up her stockings with blue and white garters; in Paris, since 1830, they are blue, red, and white: and when dinner is nearly over, one of the party, in Normandy mostly a boy, creeps under the table, unlooses and carries off one of the garters, and exhibits it amidst the cheers and applause of the company; it is then cut into small pieces, and each of the male guests attaches one of them to his buttonhole.

The *garçons* and the *dames d'honneur* are also met with pretty generally throughout all France at weddings. They are the guardians of the bride, and their duty is to take care that her honour does not suffer during the day. Every kiss that the bridegroom gives to the bride is a disgrace for them; and whenever the young couple, who strive to elude their vigilance, can steal a sly embrace, the *garçons* and *dames d'honneur* are exposed to the derision and raillery of all present. But, should the bride and bridegroom contrive, in an unguarded moment, to withdraw secretly, the storm that ensues is tremendous. The official guardians are soundly rated, and they have to search the house, from the cellar to the garret, till they find the transgressors against the code of honour, and bring them back in triumph. This practice is sensible enough, and certainly originated in a commendable popular feeling.



Peculiar customs also take place at funerals. As in many other places in France, the catholic congregation has no hearse; the dead, therefore, are always carried to the grave by bearers appointed for the purpose. This imparts greater solemnity to the funeral processions. The hearse is itself a sort of grave; the coffin is withdrawn by it from our sight, and we already feel ourselves to be separated further from it than when it is borne before us. At Havre you frequently see all the servants, more especially the domestic servants, of the deceased following the corpse; and if this practice is in itself perfectly sensible, it is converted into a farce by the way in which the mourners are dressed up in a broad-brimmed hat with long crape band. After the servants comes sometimes a long train of paupers, who are called *pleureurs*. These mostly carry a large loaf under their arm, to testify to all the world that the deceased thought of them in dying, though perhaps he had made by illicit gains the money which paid for the bread.

Funeral entertainments are met with in Normandy, as almost every where else, and, though now a mockery of sorrow, they owe their origin to the circumstances of former times, when towns were more rare, and when friends and acquaintances came from the country for many leagues round, and naturally had need of refreshment. A peculiar custom here — at least it is new to me — is that of presenting to the priests who attend the funeral a pair of gloves on a large salver: they take them,

quietly put them in their pocket, retaining their own gloves, or even following the procession without any. Thus these reverend pastors are here turned into dealers in gloves, and many a glove given at a funeral may at the next ball grasp the hand of a light-hearted and light-footed fair one threading the mazes of the merry dance. Extremes meet. The protestants have a hearse, and so the whole ceremony passes off in the prosaic Protestant form.

I may further remark that here, as in so many other places, a person cannot die without a capital of from eighty to one hundred francs, if he would be decently put into the ground, and not go upon tick after his death. But enough of the dead; let us return to the living.

Had I not happened to keep a sort of diary since my residence in Havre, there would have been nothing to remind me that to-day is Good Friday. In the streets the usual daily bustle of busy life; the merchants assembled in the open air before the church, by way of 'Change; in the market buyers and sellers haggling as they were yesterday and the day before — all this is so totally different from the quiet of Good Friday in my own country, that one need but walk through the streets of Havre on this day to convince one's-self how rude a shock the Christian religion has received in France. It will be difficult, nay impossible, to restore it; and, though the want of a religious feeling — it is certainly nothing more yet — seems to be spreading among the people, this will only be the field

in which new seed may some day be sown, but which will scarcely impart fresh vigour to a dying plant.

The sacredness of the day, and even a temperature of three degrees below zero, did not prevent a charlatan from offering his goods for sale in the open air in the public market-place. It is characteristic enough that these men are still allowed to carry on their trade in enlightened France, and that they yet find customers. I occasionally heard a wish expressed that the government would put an end to the nuisance ; but, to look at the matter in the proper light, this would be a crying injustice ; for, since Robert Macaire may become minister, peer, deputy, advocate, physician, and even parson, and has, it is said, at times been all these, it would be a denial of all consanguinity to pretend to stop the trade of these street Macaires. I have often listened to them with pleasure, and admired the natural eloquence of the French. I can assure you that the address delivered by this quack in Havre edified me almost as much as the speeches of Messrs. Guizot, Thiers, and Mauguin have ever done, and perhaps none but those of Messrs. Fulchiron and Bugcaud have given me greater pleasure than that.

I am sorry that I cannot write short-hand, and that the cold did not permit me to take notes. I would otherwise have translated the whole speech, which would be a model of parliamentary eloquence, and shame M. Thiers himself — though perhaps

not. It was made, in regard to form, extempore; for the speaker set out with assuring his hearers that he would be brief, as the weather would not admit of long speeches, and he had no wish to tire his hearers. "Je serai court; messieurs! je n'abuserai pas des moments précieux de mon estimable et honorable auditoire." I would lay a wager that these golden words of the quack's occur in at least one hundred thousand speeches of the greatest orators of France and England, and in four out of five since 1830 in France. And, to make the resemblance still more striking, the honourable charlatan then commenced a short address, which lasted a good hour.

"Gentlemen," says an orator in the chamber of deputies, "the political sciences have made great advances; new systems have been invented and applied, and we deny not that these have often produced very beneficial results. But shall we on that account underrate the experience of our forefathers; shall we reject the good which our ancestors had the skill to draw forth from the circle of their knowledge? No, gentlemen, let us adhere to ancient experience, tried by the application of a thousand years, whereas, the results of the new have often been very doubtful." I quote here a passage that is to be found on more than a hundred pages of the *Moniteur*, and refer to the numbers from April 1, 1832-1837. The mountebank said, "Gentlemen, the medical and surgical sciences have made great advances; new systems have been invented

and applied, and I deny not that these have often produced very beneficial results. But shall we on that account underrate the experience of our forefathers, shall we reject the good which our ancestors had the skill to draw forth from the circle of their knowledge? No, gentlemen, let us adhere to experience, tried by the application of a thousand years, whereas, the results of the new have often been very doubtful."

Then the gentlemen in the chamber turn to their portfolio, open it, take out documents and *projets de loi*, and proceed. "Our inquiries concerning the state of France have produced a conviction which nothing can shake, that in the case before us the measures proposed by many members of the chamber, most respectable men, it is true, but hurried into the vortex of innovation, go too far, that they are dangerous, that on the other hand the existing institutions have long ensured the progress of France, that they are founded on the manners and wants of the people, that they will, consequently, have beneficial results, and must not be attacked." "My inquiries concerning the state of the human body," cried our mountebank, holding up and turning over the leaves of an old bulky herbarium, in which were pasted a great variety of plants, "have produced a conviction which nothing can shake, that, in the cases which I shall presently state, the medicines proposed by physicians, most respectable men, it is true, but hurried into the vortex of innovation, go too far, that they are dan-



gerous; that on the other hand the old vegetable remedies, which have for thousands of years protected mankind against diseases, and cured them, are founded in Nature, and must not be attacked." "We have," continues M. Thiers, "studied both systems, compared them, weighed the results, and, experience, always the best touchstone of truth, has invariably pronounced in our favour." "I," said the mountebank, "have studied both systems, compared them, weighed the results, and experience, always the best touchstone of truth, has invariably attested the infallibility of my draught."

I might carry this comparison still further, for our wonder-working doctor said:—"Gentlemen, I am not one of those who offer you a specific for all diseases, like many of my colleagues. Far be it from me to attempt to delude those who grant me their confidence; and it can only be with the intention of deluding that people pretend to have discovered a remedy for all diseases. Death alone cures all evils; yes, gentlemen, and those who have a remedy for all, have formed a league with death. My study of Nature and of diseases of herbs, and of man, has proved to me incontestably that such a remedy for all diseases is impossible." Having spoken in most extraordinary medical terms of the various diseases, the seat of them, &c., he at length said, "I seek, gentlemen, nothing but the truth, nothing but the welfare of mankind, and, therefore, I confine myself to the declaration that the efficacy of my draught is infallible in four cases only, and

the most decisive results" — here he produced a large bottle full of worms, and turned it about in his hand, but without interrupting his speech — "during twenty years' practice have proved, that, in those four cases," holding up the bottle, as if in the attitude of swearing, "its operation is always certain, and immediate." At last, after speaking a long time in the spirit and tone, and with the looks and gestures of parliamentary eloquence, he enumerated the four diseases for which his draught was an infallible cure: these were deafness, complaints of the stomach, rheumatism, and worms. The bottle was his tapeworm trophy, his Vendome-pillar. Taken inwardly, poured into the ear, or rubbed in, the specific operated according to circumstances, and for this wonderful remedy the dear, kind, humane man asked no more than ten sous, say ten sous. That was, certainly, an egregious blunder against all parliamentary usage, and, if I might till then have taken him for some disguised minister, councillor of state, or simple deputy, who was making game of us, the illusion was instantly dispelled. I looked at him with contempt. Ten sous! turned upon my heel, and went my way.

I brought with me to Havre some letters of recommendation, and must confess that they have procured me here and there a very cordial reception and many an agreeable hour. But the acquaintances that are made by accident are of a very different kind. I have become acquainted—I really cannot tell how — with an humble cabinet-

maker, and can affirm that, at his deal table, between him and his excellent wife, I have felt more at home than I ever did in a *salon*. The heart here spoke in prose, clearly and explicitly, and I never had occasion to seek the meaning of any far-fetched *jeu de mots*. "Faites comme nous!" was the usual expression with which Antoine invited me to partake of dinner or supper with him and his wife; and I would oftener have answered, "Je veux bien," had I not feared that I should be troublesome, though I never observed the good people make the least ceremony on my account. And, in those evenings, behind new tables, bedsteads, cots for infants, and furniture of all sorts, piled up there, I have often learned more than by the blazing fire in the richly-decorated drawing-rooms of the *monde comme il faut*, where I had to pay my tribute of ennui, or to endure silent irony.

Yesterday evening I called to see my friend Antoine. His wife, who had the preceding evening presented him with a fine boy, was sitting by the fire. We had been chatting together for full half an hour, and there was nothing to lead me to suspect that this woman had only the day before done a job which usually betrays itself for weeks and months together in every look, every motion, in the appearance and language, of women. There was the same vigour of mind, the same flow of spirits, the same energetic language, as before. While we were talking, the nurse provided for the new citizen of the world entered. She came to fetch the in-

fant. Of all the Parisian, indeed, I might almost say French, customs, none has so firmly established itself as that of transferring infants immediately after their birth to a nurse, banishing them from the paternal home, and depriving them of a mother's care. I was surprised to meet with it in the country, and still more in the house of a sensible, and in other respects clear-sighted artisan, and was glad when, on my putting the question, the mother replied that unfortunately a complaint in her breasts obliged her to comply with the practice. So the things belonging to the little traveller, whose age could yet be reckoned only by hours, were collected. Shirts, napkins, caps, bed-clothes, were packed up and put into a cradle, which served for a box.

I have seen while a boy many a parting, when sons were torn from their mother's arms to be marched off to the army; I have seen some here at the quay, when the loosing of a cable was about to place an ocean between lovers, which have often presented themselves again to my mind in unpleasant dreams; but never did tear make such an impression upon my heart, as that which the young mother brushed from her eye, when she gave a farewell kiss to the babe, to which a few hours before she had given the first kiss of welcome. The infant knew not his mother, could not return her salute, and was already torn from her bosom, to be put to that of a stranger, who only calculated how much she was to earn by her service. Here was affection on one side only, and not even a conscious-



ness, not so much as a presentiment, of that affection on the other. It was a bitter tear that trickled from the eye of the mother, and fell upon her coarse winter corset; and this trial had a greater effect upon her than her bodily sufferings; she motioned her husband to lead me away that she might lie down, for the bed stood in the shop, exposed to wind and weather.

If in France it rarely happens, in Paris and among the higher classes in the provinces scarcely ever, that there is a family, it is mainly owing to this practice of putting infants out to nurse. Whoever considers a family as an incumbrance, as a bar to advancement in life, may deem himself lucky in being without one; for my part, I look upon this as the greatest misfortune. That family-life encourages many prejudices I will not pretend to deny, but by dissolving family-ties you will not destroy those prejudices. On the other hand, without family, all morality, all feeling of one's own worth, and all respect for it in others, would very soon be extinguished; for the family teaches us to feel what is right and wrong, before we learn to comprehend it at school, and it is precisely this feeling that becomes conscience, while the conception leads to conviction only. No sophistry can shake the former, whereas the latter changes according to the reasons that one seeks and finds, or imagines that one finds. This is one of the principal causes of all the evil in France, and Robert Macaire, whom I regard as the most expressive



type of the higher French society of the present day, was to a certainty suckled by a wet nurse, and educated at boarding-school, where he never knew what it was to love a mother, and so very coolly robs his own son, and that too as a matter of right and from conviction, upon the ancient Roman principle, that the son is bound to support his aged father.

While at nurse, the child receives only bodily sustenance, if even sufficient of that, and grows up wild and cold, a stranger to the genial warmth of maternal love. From this unloving state, the child is taken to be consigned to the care of a *bonne*, and again to remain in doubt whether it ought to love the latter or to obey the mother most. From the *bonne* children are transferred to boarding-schools, and here they become acquainted with vice, which springs up in such seminaries for youth like weeds, or is bred like the cankerworm that preys upon the heart and marrow of the tree. Instead of that obedience which parental kindness wins from them, is set up the law of the school, which they do not comprehend—instead of living love, the dead letter. In their teacher they see only a task-master, to cheat, to deceive, whom is their first thought on rising, their last on going to bed, their morning prayer and their evening devotion. Thus educated, the youth—the young man, to use the French expression—at length enters the world, free from control. In every law he sees a repetition of the absurd school system, which he has learned to hate from having borne its fetters for ten years; in every

authority he sees this schoolmaster, who chastised him according to his caprice, and to cheat whom was his delight, his study. Perhaps this consideration alone may suffice to enable us to comprehend how it became so easy for the French to burst all the bonds of ancient usage, and also how difficult — nay impossible, until the fundamental evil is remedied — it will be for them, after overthrowing the old, to build up a new and durable structure.

In France there are persons who have some suspicion of the cause of the evil. Guizot seems at times to have laid his finger upon it; but I would lay a wager that he too has put out his children to nurse, for he sees only the wound, not the source of the complaint, and therefore he could propose a law which was absolutely to tear children from their parents, and to deliver them over for better or worse to the ferule of the schoolmaster. My friend Antoine, to whom I communicated some of these remarks, felt their force, and an emphatic imprecation, on account of the necessity of putting his own child out to nurse, was his affirmative reply.

We soon returned to the room or shop—in regard to space, the Frenchman is the most contented creature in the world—and found his wife snug in bed. Were I a painter, the scene which presented itself would have furnished a good subject for a picture: in the foreground the furniture of all sorts, bedsteads, cots, chairs, tables, piled up, and separated from the background by two high chests of drawers. Behind one of these chests, on the right, the bed,

and around it half a dozen women, old and young, who dropped in one after another to see and to congratulate their neighbour; on the left, my friend Antoine and myself, at the corner of the fireplace, in which was a blazing fire, and upon it a pot standing on a trevet. On one side, the titter, the gossip, the good wishes, and the good advice, of the female visitors to the mother; and, on the other, we two, engaged in earnest conversation on the state of the labouring class in Havre, at times digressing into politics, and presently returning again to the manners and customs of the town: the female attendant going to and fro between the two groupes, sometimes to wait upon the lying-in woman, at others to look after the cookery that was going forward over the fire. It would have made an interesting picture.

When upon the subject of manners and customs in Havre, I asked my friend if any thing remarkable occurred at the birth of a child. He said nothing about the consecrated tapers which are burned in the lying-in chamber, nor about many other things which he might think too common. He told me that the first time the woman goes abroad it is to church, where she receives a blessing, and, at the same time, two loaves are consecrated. One of these goes to the priest, who is paid besides, and the other is kept by the woman, who carries it home, and divides it among her friends and relations, which very properly and justly furnishes occasion for a feast, as even consecrated bread cannot be eaten dry

and without meat. On the day when the young citizen of the world is christened there is another feast, to which only the godfather, godmother, and nearest relatives, besides all the little children of friends and acquaintance, and of the nearest neighbours, are invited, and treated with cakes and sweet-meats. This custom is sensible enough, as the new comer is thus introduced, as it were, into the circle of his relatives, friends, and future playmates. In Lorraine I have met with a counterpart to this custom in particular villages. As here at baptism, so in Lorraine at the funeral of a deceased child, all his playmates are invited, and treated with rice-milk.

While we were thus chatting about one thing or another, the visitors had gradually retired, and I was surprised, on my return home, to find that it was nearly half past ten o'clock.

## CHAPTER VII.

The question of Centralisation or Decentralisation — Absolutism of Paris over the Provinces; Examples in illustration of it — Baneful influence of Parisian Centralisation on Morals and on Political Activity — Benefits of Centralisation — Reasons why all the Interests of a Country should not be absorbed by the Capital.

A VITAL question for the futurity of France is that of centralisation, or decentralisation. After the revolution of July, voices were raised in all the provinces against the capital, and the younger and more vigorous portion of their inhabitants arrayed themselves against the absolutism of Paris. Faint echoes of this contest are now but rarely heard; the majority of the advocates of decentralisation seem to despair of the possibility of emancipating their localities from the predominant influence of the capital; but many, even now, believe that the moment is not yet arrived, that Paris still has a vocation for the future to fulfil; while others labour in silence, or look on quietly, in consequence of the political relaxation which has taken place, and of the lesson given to all in the highest quarters downward, both by precept and example, to strive to get rich, and to make a position for themselves.



But the battle is only deferred ; it will certainly be fought out sooner or later. The question is propounded, and such questions require only to be started in order to be some day solved. On the other hand, the oppressive tyranny of the capital is too universally diffused, too omnipresent, not to strike any reflecting person at every step.

Let me adduce a few examples in evidence. It is a question at this moment whether Paris shall have a railroad communication with the sea, by Rouen and Havre, and whether the sea shall communicate with Alsace by means of another from Paris to Strasburg. The traders of Rouen desire that this railroad shall be carried no further than Rouen, those of Havre that it may be extended to their town. The question is decided in Paris, but that decision depends not on the interest of the commerce of all France, but on the momentary interest of the predominant party in Paris, and of its friends and adherents. Rouen is politically more important than Havre ; the deputies of the former place are more influential than those of the latter ; and so all commercial interests, all principles of national economy, which are totally adverse to artificial entrepôts, are thrust into the background ; and, though it is not yet decided that the railway shall be carried no further than Rouen by the government, though it is possible that the claims of Havre, founded on the nature and wants of the place, may be recognized in the Chamber, still it is now evident that the government favours Rouen,

and that this preference has for some time past prevented the execution of the plan of a railway.

But wherefore travel so far for an illustration ! I was inquiring the other day in all the booksellers' shops for a work printed and published in Caen, a town only twelve leagues distant, to and from which a steamer is going and returning several times in a week, without being able to meet with a copy. When I asked if they could get it for me, they one and all replied : " Yes, if it is to be had of the Paris booksellers." A still more striking instance of this kind is furnished by the novels of M. Corbière, editor of the *Journal du Havre*. Though he has at his command the principal printing-office in Havre, he nevertheless has his works printed and published in Paris. When I made a remark on this circumstance, he replied : " What am I to do ? If I were to get the work printed here, not a creature would read it for that very reason."

In the time of Louis XVI., there lived at Havre a celebrated naturalist, the abbé Diguemarre, to whose merit Paris and London paid homage. When the king was at Havre, he wished to speak to him, and inquired where he lived. Not a creature had ever heard of the existence of such a person as the abbé Diguemarre ; the king was obliged to leave the town without finding him, and it was not till his return to Paris that he learned his address, and sent for him. I am very certain that the same sort of thing might occur at this day, and that there are numbers of extremely well-informed persons in

Havre, who would not miss a single *feuilleton* on the subject of the exhibition, and yet do not know that M. Drouin, one of the best marine painters in France, lives just round the corner in the next street, and paints there such pieces as very few of those on whose productions they descant so learnedly could produce.

And then the influence of Parisian centralisation on morals! In the time of the republic, the provinces once strove to maintain a different opinion from the capital, but they have not done so since. With Napoleon people talked here as in Paris about *la gloire*; under the restoration, for a time, with Paris, about the happiness of peace; then, like the capital, they joined the opposition, and now again, like the capital, they pay homage more or less to the principles of Robert Macaire. I am not talking politics here, but morals. As in Paris, so in the provinces, all decent means of rapidly acquiring wealth in order to attain influence, are the grand aim of the majority of the French; and by "decent means" they understand here, as in Paris, all those which do not lead direct to the gallows, and only point the way thither when they have been clumsily employed. In a country where the people are politically active, where they have ambition, this is the necessary effect of a law which makes franes the standard of abilities, civil virtue, loyalty, and merit. As in France every thing may and must be talked about, this principle was formally reduced to a system, and then publicly propounded



before all the world by its champion, M. Guizot, in his celebrated speech at the conclusion of the session of 1837. M. Guizot lays down the principle, M. Thiers carries it into practice, and, through the influence of the capital, the principle and the example are propagated throughout all France. Everywhere the same striving after wealth, everywhere the same cunning in the employment of means, reverence of nothing, neither father nor mother, neither God nor virtue, and attention paid only to the sharp limits of the law, in order to avoid the sword of justice. In Havre every question involving the welfare of mankind is only a question about the price of cotton, as in Paris about the rise or fall of the *rentes*. As in Paris, literature and the press are in the provinces—if, however, they exist there at all—a question of money; and writers attack or espouse the cause of the government, according as they expect to gain a certain number of subscribers and purchasers for their papers and works. I need scarcely observe that there are exceptions, and exceptions the more honourable, inasmuch as they risk their influence, defy the fashion, and make themselves a laughing-stock. But I am speaking of the rule.

This state of things is natural, for it is the curse of a bad government that it makes the people bad. I do not suppose that all this is done purposely, neither is it necessary that it should be: where a pestilential wind blows, one has no need to poison one's self—the thing is done for one.

It will always and under all circumstances be in the end a misfortune if political activity is entirely concentrated in one place. This concentration must very soon create in the centre a vast, disproportionately populous city. But in great cities interests clash too much; intrigue, deception itself, obtains too important an influence not to corrupt in a short time the whole population, with rare exceptions. By means of the centralisation this corruption is communicated to the whole nation. Rome furnishes on this point a warning example, and unless sooner or later a new political or moral revolution rouses the spirit of independence in the provinces, and the unnatural centralisation of Paris is destroyed by means of it, France will be ruined by Paris as the Roman empire was by Rome.

There are epochs in which this centralisation is a benefit, in which it is necessary. But for this, France never could have withstood the assault of the whole world at the end of the last century. One may say, on the other hand, that, but for this, she never could have been conquered in the way she was in 1814 and 1815. But for this again, the revolution of July would have been impossible; at any rate, it could not have been accomplished in three days. On the contrary, but for this, the moral impulsion given to the whole nation by the revolution of July could not have been so annihilated and in so short a time. There is no perhaps in the case.

Against the external and the internal enemy, a



centralisation of the power of the state is necessary, but I cannot help thinking that this might be effected without any necessity for the whole intellectual and moral power of a nation being absorbed in a single point. A nation that has no political centre is not a nation in a political point of view. A centre, therefore, is necessary, if a nation shall keep up in the eyes of the world the character of a nation ; if it shall not lose by degrees the consciousness of its existence as such : it is necessary in order to oppose the foreign foe with energy and effect.

But this centre of the political power of the nation is only necessary for its representation as a nation. All other interests, those of art, science, commerce, nay, even jurisprudence and legislation, are not necessarily attached to the centre ; on the contrary, it is necessary for their independence, for their generalisation, that they should be at a distance from the perturbing influence of a movement, which mostly has but one direction. France would be an infinite gainer, if she had good schools of art in the provincial towns, if her best high schools were not in Paris, if her principal Exchange were at Havre or Marseilles, her Court of Cassation at Orleans, her Chamber of Deputies at Tours or Lyons. In many respects, it is true, such an arrangement would render business complicated, but it would spread the vital energies and activity throughout all France ; it would infuse sound juices into the different branches of the tree ; whereas at present the trunk is surrounded only by rank climbing

plants, and the boughs are without either leaves or fruit.

In Paris, I am aware, minds rub together, and the collision frequently produces something great and beautiful. Perhaps France would not have made such advances in particular branches of knowledge and the arts, if Paris had not collected such a multitude of thinkers. But this is only a factitious improvement, which finds no echo in the mass of the people, and there only is there any real improvement where this becomes the property of the nation. Of what benefit was it to Greece and Rome that individual thinkers were thousands of years in advance of their age, while the mass of the people remained in ignorance? That only which becomes general property through the natural channels promotes the prosperity of the whole. We are yet posed by the same riddle which Plato and Socrates of yore sought to solve, and have scarcely advanced any further towards the solution, because it lies beyond the limits of our nature. But if our age has advanced further than that of Rome and Greece, it is because many thousands now know what was then known only to individuals, not because we know a great deal more than they did.

I have not referred at all to purely provincial interests, for it requires very little penetration to perceive how gross an absurdity it is that people should decide in Paris whether Lyons or Toulon shall have a savings bank, whether they shall be allowed to establish any bank at all, to construct a

railway to the next town, or merely to build a school and to appoint a schoolmaster.

All great capitals are a misfortune for a country ; but Paris is a running wound, which, unless the knife some day cuts away the proud flesh, will sooner or later drain France of all her strength. —Rome and Paris !

## CHAPTER VIII.

Havre, the point of embarkation for German Emigrants to America—Contempt of the people of Havre for the Emigrants—Causes of the disposition of the Germans to emigrate—Contrast between the German and the French Peasant—Manœuvres of Germans resident at Havre for fleecing the Emigrants—Tricks of Houses which make the equipment of Emigrants their special business—Greediness of German Consuls at Havre—Distressing consequences resulting from these causes.

HAVRE is a colony to which all the commercial nations have more or less sent their representatives. Hence there is scarcely a civilized or half civilized language but meets the ear occasionally on the promenades and in the coffee-houses; and there is no town in France where the smart language of the country is so dreadfully mangled. The Germans are very numerous, and besides those resident here, some thousands of emigrants are arriving almost every fortnight. These have drawn a great number of German publicans, retail shopkeepers, and brokers, to the town, and very often the wives and children, sometimes whole families, of German emigrants stay behind, so that the number of the resident Germans is continually increasing.

One evening, walking on the quays after the



people had left work, I heard the sound of a violin playing a waltz on board one of the ships, and occasionally the loud *Juchhei* of German peasants. I do not recollect to have ever heard this in France, even when the dance was ever so obstreperous. These must be Germans; and so I made my way across several vessels till I reached the one on the deck of which a whole German cargo were dancing to the instrument of a village fiddler from Rhenish Bavaria. The ship was to sail the next day, and all the emigrants, lads, lasses, men, women and children, were dancing in the highest spirits, as though they had been at a fair.

I have several times seen German emigrants wiping the big tears from their heavy eyes when the ship was passing the quay, and they waved their adieu to a friend who was to sail in another vessel on the next or the succeeding day. I once saw a young woman tear open her neckerchief to relieve her oppressed bosom, and with the exclamation of "My mother! my poor mother!" push aside her husband, who held out to her their infant six months old. And, on another occasion, I saw a native of the Black Forest, who had endeavoured to drown his sorrow by drinking, leap upon the gunwale, and with an emphatic imprecation consign all Germany and *Amtmann N.* to the bottom of the sea, in doing which he knocked off his fur cap, which fell into the water, and he had well nigh tumbled after it. All the spectators on the jetty, and even the majority of the emigrants, laughed



heartily at this scene, and had been wholly unmoved at the former ; but I was deeply affected by both. All this, however, was nothing to the joyous passengers on board the ship just ready to start. These people were leaving their native land, house and home, the spot where they had played as boys, where they had loved as youths, where as men they had listened with delight to the prattle of their first-born : and nothing, nothing indicated that they had turned their backs for ever on all that was most sacred, that they had abandoned the graves of their fathers, that they had sold the cradles of their children. They danced, they made merry. *Juchhei!* that was a mirth !

What is the name of that country, unfortunate enough to give birth to such sons, still more unfortunate to account for and to justify such indifference ? I know it well, I know the people of South Germany, with a heart that threatens to break, when home-sickness courses like a burning fever through the veins, and the bosom is ready to burst. And yet these people emigrate, and dance, and make merry, on the very evening before their departure !

Here, in Havre, I never heard the poorest labourer, the meanest sailor, speak otherwise than with contempt of the Germans, or rather of the *Suisses*, as they are here called, because formerly a Swiss regiment which spoke German was stationed in Havre—and this sentiment extends to the middle and in part also to the higher class. I was silenced,

whenever I attempted to defend them, by the reply : "But why do they emigrate? We French would rather live at home on a crust of bread, than anywhere else in plenty. What sort of a country must that be which people can forsake, like these Suisses !"

Germany is one of the finest countries in the world. It abounds in every thing, and yet such is the distress that it forces thousands every year to seek another climate, in order that the torments of a hell upon earth may not deprive them of the hope of a heaven hereafter, or make them doubt the existence of a ruling Providence. Let any one explain this if he can. I am often told that it is owing to German curiosity, which is anxious to know what is beyond the mountains and across the sea, and which drives them with a sort of eagerness into foreign countries. I have felt this kind of curiosity myself ; it has driven me too from my country over hill and dale ; but a word, the accidental mention of the name of a place where I have been happy, the sound of a bell resembling that of the church near which I once dwelt, the chirp of a bird, a dream, a mere nothing, are frequently sufficient to awaken a very different sort of longing, and to send my spirit a-travelling homeward. The fondness for travel drives us abroad ; the longing for home draws us back with irresistible force into the arms of our kindred, and chains us to the spot where we sported as boys, where we first perceived that we had a heart in our bosoms. Precisely this contradiction

is the German character, but neither one nor the other alone.

People talk of the everlasting migrations of the German tribes, in order to account for the emigration of the poor peasants to America. But these migrations were invariably in the main the effect of one and the same cause. All those tribes of Germans—Saxons, Franks, Normans, or by whatever names they may be called—had not room enough in their native land ; they knew not what to do or how to live ; they grasped their swords, and sought a new country, because they would not starve in the old one. Such is the case at the present day. Nothing but distress, present misery, and the prospect of a darker future, compels these unfortunate people to bid a joyful adieu to their fondly loved native land, and to seek to live by their labour in a far distant country.

The sufferings of many centuries are to be read in the features of these people, and the more distinctly when you see them along with French peasants and labourers. In the countenances and looks of the French sailors you frequently perceive characteristic traits of their moral depravity ; and this is observable at times, though of late less frequently, and only by way of exception, even in the working people in towns. But put a French peasant, of either sex, beside a German, and they form as great a contrast as the master beside his servant, the mistress beside her maid. In every look, every attitude, every motion of the French



peasants, male and female, there is always a certain grace; they cast down their eyes before no man, be he who he may; they are never at a loss for an answer; they know that they need fear nobody, that the law for them is the law for their superiors. German awkwardness is become proverbial, and its cause is generally sought deeper than it lies. A feeling of independence is the antidote, and whence is the German peasant and artisan to derive this? Whoever doubts what I say, let him place a German, who from his youth has lived in the higher circles of society, beside a Frenchman, and I am certain that very often the former will not be the more awkward of the two.

I have a hundred times made the observation that the German peasant is not only heavier, duller, clumsier, than the French peasant, who is always graceful in comparison with him, but that he is also uglier: in the women this difference is particularly striking. The German tribes once had the reputation of being one of the finest races of men. The Romans thought no women more beautiful than the golden-haired German, and they were connoisseurs and had their choice. Even at the present day, you see in the towns of Germany, among the higher and middle classes, more really handsome women than in France. On the other hand, I scarcely recollect having seen among the German emigrants one woman who was qualified to compete in this respect with the wives of the working men here, or with the market-women and the female peasants. They are

the most wretched, the scum of the peasantry of individual provinces of Germany, who have had to struggle all their lives with distress and misery, and on that account the ugliest.

To the spectator of any nation, and to a German in particular, it is a painful sight to see such a caravan of emigrants, in which the gray hair of the grandfather and the inarticulate tones of the infant speak a language which rends the heart. But if these poor creatures excite profound compassion, there is another class of their countrymen here of whom one cannot speak but with abhorrence. To these the unfortunate emigrants are an object of speculation, whom they contrive by every possible artifice to strip of the last farthing, of the last shirt upon their back. The Germans who keep lodging-houses here are, with rare exceptions, intriguers and bankrupts, many of whom the fear of punishment has forced to leave their native country. Most of the emigrants, as they understand not a word of French, are completely at their mercy, and every bushel of potatoes, every joint of meat, that they buy, must pay toll to these their countrymen, who offer their services out of pure philanthropy. The poor wretches do not purchase an article of any kind without being grossly cheated, the agent and the seller, who know one another, sharing the gain. A German Jew, who had settled here, sold to almost every emigrant who had a few dollars left, a watch, according as the buyer was richer or poorer, for 100, 50, 30, 10 francs, and even still less, one-



half at least of which was profit, so that he made from ten to fifteen thousand francs a year, and often more. A watchmaker, to whom he was accustomed to refer as to the worth of the watch, received five francs for every one that he sold. In printed instructions for the emigrants, they were told that watches were much dearer in America than in Europe; and our German Hebrew demonstrated as clearly as possible that the wisest thing they could do would be to turn the rest of their money into watches. After the poor peasant had thus been duly prepared by himself or his colleagues, he came at the last moment with his watches, and sold to such as took the bait at such a price as each could afford to pay; and the warranted watch usually went at least till the ship had left Havre. I know a watchmaker here, of whom the Jew bought old chains and other parts, out of which he put the works together. This traffic, however, seems likely to be checked by another, for it is now said that fowling-pieces are more advantageous than watches, and so a trade in them has commenced, which is carried on in the same manner as that in watches has been. These are but solitary instances of the way in which the emigrants are treated in regard to every thing that they buy here. In a few days or a few hours the ocean parts buyer and seller, and effectually prevents all complaint.

There are several houses here which make the equipment of emigrants their particular business. One of them is connected with the packets, which

sail pretty regularly, and therefore has some advantage over the rest. On the whole, however, one is as good as another, that is to say, the emigrants are cheated and swindled by most of them. Some of them have their recruiting offices on the frontiers of France and Germany. There the different agents outdo one another in the terms which they offer, and promise the emigrants all that they can desire. But in the contract, which is always in French, there is not a word about these terms, and to this contract they are referred when they have at length arrived here. It specifies, in general, that they shall have a passage in such or such a ship, or in *some other*, and so they are obliged to wait mostly for weeks, four, six, eight, in a town where living is very dear, and where, moreover, every thing is contrived to fleece them, till the ship so and so, or *some other*, is ready to sail. The provisions stipulated in these contracts are reckoned by kilogrammes, but with the agents a kilogramme is twice as heavy as here in the warehouses of the contractors; and as the poor, ignorant German peasants cannot accustom themselves to this weight, the overseers of the warehouses mostly find means to filch several per cent. more from each sort of provisions for themselves and their masters. The greater part of the emigrants are therefore in general obliged to lay in a supplementary stock here at their own expence.

It is scarcely possible to carry a complaint against this conduct into court, as the contracts mostly allow the outfitters all possible latitude.

But if such a complaint were possible and valid in law, it is scarcely practicable in fact. The German peasant knows not a word of the language of the country; he must, therefore, employ a deputy, and would thus be certain to fall into the hands of a new bloodsucker. Then again, the contractors are on the best terms with the police-officers, sergeants, and gendarmes, with whom they are in daily intercourse, and the higher officers of justice have not time to attend to such bagatelles.

The German consuls, whose duty it is to protect their countrymen, have in general other and far more important business to mind. But truth requires me to declare that M. Meinel, the Bavarian consul, has on several occasions warmly interested himself on behalf of his countrymen, and bettered their condition by his interference. I am not aware of any similar interference on the part of the other consuls, but will not affirm that no such instance has occurred. One of these consuls, representing several German states, and among the rest one of the larger states of North Germany, is known to the emigrants from those countries only by their each being obliged to pay him, out of the little that his countrymen have left them here, two francs for his *Visa*, out of which those who transact the business for them make three. The consulship is thus become an office that produces a yearly income of five or six thousand francs, and frequently more. If the wretch who steals and plunders at a fire deserves to be flung without trial into the flames, he



who robs an emigrant, or who merely enriches himself at the expence of the latter, ought at least to be keel-hauled under the ship that is to carry him out. Such a law in the spirit of Draco would be justifiable before God and the world, whatever the sentimentality of our times might have to allege against it.

Owing to the manner in which the emigrants are imposed upon at the frontiers, it is very often the case that whole families, who have spent their all on the journey, are compelled, on their arrival here, to beg provisions and other necessities, if they would not lose the money which they have paid for their passage. They are often obliged to stop here for a year together to earn sufficient to pay for their fare ; and in many cases the mothers and children stay behind ; while the father alone proceeds in the hope of soon saving enough in America to pay for their passage. It happens not unfrequently that, while they are labouring here to earn their bread, the truly German fondness for travel subsidises, and they settle quietly in this place. Occasionally, the women seek to earn money in a different way, and the wholly neglected children, excluded from school by poverty and ignorance of the language, run wild and roam about on the quays, in order that, by petty thefts from the goods which are unloading, they may help to raise the sum required for their passage. The attention of the French Government being at length directed to this circumstance, orders were issued that a passport for emigration should not be

granted to any person who was not possessed of a sufficient sum to defray the expence of the journey through France and the passage. But the consequences of this ordinance only added to the embarrassments of the hapless wanderers. The agents themselves advised them to borrow the requisite sum, and referred them to officious friends; and thus the emigrants had often enough to pay on the frontiers 30, 40, 50 francs, for the sum of 300, 600, 900 francs, advanced to them, according to the magnitude of their families, for a few hours, by Jewish extortioners, and of course arrived so much the more destitute in Havre.

From all these facts it is easy to infer why Germany and the Germans stand so low in the estimation of the common people of this country. There is a way to put an end to this emigration, but to propose it would only excite a smile of pity in those who have the power to help. If, however, it cannot be prevented, it would be a work worthy of a philanthropist, of a German who loves his country and his kind, if he were to employ his capital — and he would risk nothing in doing so — in transporting these unfortunate creatures as cheaply and as safely as possible to America. But perhaps this proposal too may draw only a smile of pity from all those who feel themselves above such trifles.



## CHAPTER IX.

Views of the Sea—The Pier at Havre—Scenes to be witnessed there—La folle Marguerite—Sea-water Baths—Pleasures of Sea-Bathing—Nature of the Beach—Promiscuous Bathing of the Sexes; Instances in which fatal accidents have been prevented by it—Dangerous Surf.

THE first time that I beheld the sea, it made a very different impression upon me from what I had anticipated. The sky was overcast, not a breath of air was stirring, and the sea lay a wide waste before me. The longer I contemplated this inanimate mass, the more a feeling of awe stole over me. On the morrow, a vivifying breath swept over this dead mass, and where the preceding day all was dreary and still as in a sandy desert, joyous waves were now dancing, and driving one another along. Near the shore they ran rippling to the beach, dashed upon it with a shout of victory, and rolled back noisily over the gravel. And they sported with the barks which the hardihood of man had consigned to them, at one time lifting them high into the air, and then hurling them down as deep. And then all the vessels going in and out, yielding to the impulse of the waves, like proud swans upon their

lakes ; and those distant sails, hovering like sea-gulls at the horizon, and those gulls which imagination converted into vessels !

And the next day I went again to the shore. Heavy clouds covered the face of heaven, and lay like a pall upon the sea ; and here and there in this dun veil was a rent, through which burst the bright rays of the sun. The wind howled over the sea, and lashed the waves so that they reared themselves high into the air, and dropped snorting down again. Wo to the vessel that had not reached the harbour, and was between the mighty combatants—wind and water ! I watched this combat, and heard the broken cry of horror raised by the seamen, when the furious element dashed the ship against the pier, and she went to pieces. Not content with having conquered those who had boldly defied their vehemence, the billows rolled over the shattered vessel, as an enraged combatant tramples upon a vanquished adversary after he has struck him to the ground. And when the wind at length ceased to lash the sea, the latter continued to grumble for many hours, and was the more awful as the howling of the one no longer indicated the cause of the commotion of the other.

A few days afterwards I went again to the shore. All was calm and still. I now comprehended the grandeur of this calmness ; and it no longer produced the unpleasant impression of a boundless desert of sand, for I was now aware of the omnipotence of the giant, and knew that he was only slumbering.

All this, indeed, is mere words; but here are combined life, ever-varying life, terrible greatness, and tranquil sublimity. And in this variety, in this union of the great, the terrible, the sublime, in this awe-exciting conflict, succeeded by the profoundest repose, lies the charm.

And then evening, and the setting sun, and night ! I have missed few sunsets since I have been in Havre, and have not seen one which was like yesterday's. But wherefore describe how the sun sinks into the sea, how it borders the horizon with gold, and how the gold-edged clouds are reflected in the mirror of the sky ? To what purpose describe how the stars disport and dance to and fro in the flood ; how the moon throws a silver streak across it, and how all this forms an exquisite charm, to which the creations of the most glowing oriental imagination appear cold and inanimate ? And then the phosphorescent waves of a summer night, which surround the belated bark, light her way, and mark her track ! I have seen a hundred, a thousand, marine pieces, and it is precisely this, which cannot be painted, that produces the variety, the life, that creates with every movement a new world.

Whenever the flood-tide permits the entrance and departure of ships, the pier is thronged. Many are only spectators of this great drama. It was some days before I comprehended it, its fable, and its moral ; and so long I too was one of the idle spectators. The entering and departing ships excited my feelings, and the pictures which they presented



were beautiful, but only pictures. But one day I heard near me a sigh, and saw a glistening tear in the eye of a young female. All then became clearer, and I comprehended that these beautiful pictures, the sea, and the ships, and the sails, animated by the wind, were only the background, only accessories of the drama that is here developed before the mind's eye ; and then I became one of the performers, nay the leader of them. There stood a man in the best years of life, who had once been handsome and vigorous, and directed his telescope to the horizon of the sea. His features betrayed a passion that distorted them ; for lust of gain is more terrible than any other, and destroys both soul and body. He was mentally calculating what he might win or lose ; and uncertainty, hope, and fear, were contending in his heart, without any of them being able to gain the victory. Not far from him stood another, who, having for a while directed his tube first to one point, then to another, at length fixed it upon an object which engrossed his whole attention. His face brightened up, and became every moment more animated, till at last he lowered the telescope, and silently, but with triumph in every look, bent his way with rapid step towards the town. Who knows what might depend on the arrival of the vessel ! perhaps the happiness of a beloved daughter ; perhaps the return of a hopeful son ; perhaps the ease of the last days of a grey-headed father, weary of life ; perhaps, too, only the momentary gratification of a never to be satiated appetite for gain. Yonder

stood a woman bowed with age, supported by the arm of a young female. They were poor, their dress proved it, and they were even unable to give wings by means of a telescope to their looks and their anxious longing. But their eyes were directed to the distance, and sought out every sail that appeared above the far horizon. I saw them frequently afterwards standing there mute and full of care, and soon knew that they were the mother and bride of a sailor, whose ship ought long since to have arrived. Every evening they returned home with disappointed hopes; and one day, when I had read in the papers of the loss of a Havre vessel, I looked for them with prophetic fears, but looked in vain. They came no more to the pier.

The departing vessels were saluted by many of the persons present. Here stood a father shouting a last adieu to his son; there a mother extending her arms in anguish towards the child of her affection, from whom she was to be parted; yonder a wife holding up her prattling infant, that the father might see it once more. And who could answer for it that all these were not the greetings of everlasting farewell!

The most touching scene that I ever beheld I witnessed here at the first flood-tide, after a tremendous storm. The pier swarmed with people, and most of them were the relatives of the fishermen, who had been overtaken by the storm while out at sea. Who can describe the extacies of joy with which here and there a woman and children de-



cried in the distance the sail of their father, their husband, their brother ! or, when the vessel was near enough, the cordial greetings of relations and friends ! But who can conceive the agony which this very joy contributed to paint on the faces of those whose eyes looked in vain for the objects of their anxiety ! With the arrival of each boat, the number of persons assembled on the pier decreased, for they hastened away to press to their bosoms those who were preserved to them. At length all the vessels and boats hastening in from right and left had entered. The sea gradually retired, and very few of the crowd collected there an hour before were left. These had in vain scrutinized with wistful looks every sail, every boat, every vessel. Hope gave place to despair, which was expressed in tones and gestures that cut me to the heart. Mothers and children stood weeping in silence, or sobbing aloud, or stedfastly gazing with tearful eyes on the sea in the distance, as though to wring from it an answer to the question : Where is my lover, my husband, my father, my son ? And the wave murmured quietly past—an awful grave, upon which not even a mound or a cross can be a wretched consolation to the unfortunate survivors.

Never shall I forget this scene, and while I lived in Havre I was most painfully reminded of it from time to time by a woman. One evening profound silence reigned around me. I was standing here, admiring the calmness of the sea, the luminous appearance of the waves, and the dancing of the

moonbeams in the liquid plain, when I heard close to me a shriek, the utter disconsolateness of which pierced me to the soul. It was such a burst of horrid joy as demons may be supposed to vent at times amid their torments. *La folle Marguerite* stood behind me, and, when I turned about, I saw her throwing bits of wood into the sea, heard her mutter incoherent words about flowers and roses, and frequently repeat the name of George. And at intervals rang that cutting cry of despair, which told the cruel story of a wounded heart, of a brain consumed by the flames of love, and by grief. Often in my most frightful dreams have I since heard this shriek. The very thought of it is enough to give me a sleepless night.

Just above the *Jetée du Nord* are the *Bains Frascati*. Here you may have sea-water baths at all seasons of the year. But during the *saison* you bathe in the open air, for which purpose there are upon the beach below the building machines in which you undress. A considerable distance further is another bathing-house, which is less brilliant, but more frequented. In the former you meet chiefly with foreigners, or with such residents at Havre as wish to keep themselves apart from the multitude; the latter has at least the advantage of being more lively.

There is scarcely a higher enjoyment on earth than sea-bathing, and with it are connected my most delightful recollections of the sea. It ought to be rather rough, but not too high, just so boisterous

that one may venture in without danger, or with very little danger, and then a luxury worthy of the gods awaits us. On such a day scarcely are we up to the knees in the water, when a wave, breaking against the shore, carries us along with it into the midst of the sportive billows. We lie quietly for a moment between two waves, as in a dell enclosed on all sides, above us the clear sky, around us the moveable wall of waters. The next wave then approaches at a steady pace: its head, adorned with curling locks of foam, or crowned by the play of the sunbeams with flowers and brilliants, bows itself before us, and lifts us up to the top of the little hill of water, lets us rest here a few seconds, and enjoy the prospect that opens around, which shows us the beautiful country, the playful swimmers and bathers, the distant shipping, and the still more distant horizon; till it slips from beneath us, and again leaves us lying between two liquid hills. Again it lifts us up, and again throws us down; and we need scarcely move an arm in this element, to enjoy the delight which we have imagined in our happiest dreams of riding upon fleecy clouds, of flying through the waves.

The pleasure of the bathers and swimmers varies like the sea itself. I was often alone, and then, when I swam through the waves, when I lay between two liquid hills, amid the mighty element, the feeling of loneliness would sometimes steal upon me, and excite a passing apprehension; but yet I could not break the spell. Often, too, there were hundreds



along with me, and I was delighted with the cheerfulness which the bracing element produced in all, with the frolics of the swimmers, with the alarms of the fair bathers, with the care with which the father watched over his little ones, and lastly, with the confidence in the invigorating effect of the salt water expressed in the countenance of every invalid. As, however, Havre is not a regular bathing-place, the number of persons of the latter class is in general small : they were here only to prove the astonishing efficacy of the sea in this respect also ; for I know a woman who came at the beginning of the bathing-season upon crutches, and who at three weeks' end might have hung them up at the altar of Neptune, as evidences of the miracle that he had wrought.

At high and low water the scene is always changed. At ebb-tide, the sea is bordered by a plain of sand a thousand and often more paces in breadth, and this plain, warmed by the sun, the bathers must cross, to get to the water and back from it to their machines ; and I have seen scarcely any, with the exception of a few sickly persons, who, either before or after bathing, failed to make it the theatre of their sports and gambols. This sandy plain continues to slope imperceptibly into the sea, and thus at ebb-tide you may walk several hundred feet into the water before it is up to your breast. An immense space is thus allowed to the bathers, and they disperse themselves in all directions as far as their courage or their stature permits. At flood-tide, on the contrary, the descent from

the shore is abrupt, and thus the sphere of their movements is much more circumscribed. The men, and occasionally women too, who can swim, venture, indeed, somewhat further; but those who have not learned that useful art stand, especially when the sea runs rather high, in long rows, holding by ropes fastened to posts, where the leaping waves break over them, and frequently dash on beyond the last in the row.

Men and women bathe here together, and I really cannot see that there is any thing objectionable in this practice. The women wear bathing-dresses of the most modest fashion, to which a ball dress is absolute nudity. Sometimes the playful waves will draw out a pin or untie a string, and then you may perhaps see the beautiful curve of a white shoulder, and the fair owner of course blushes as though she did not expose a great deal more to every eye when Fashion pleases to command her.

From my own experience on several occasions, I have found that the bathing together of the sexes was a lucky circumstance. The sea is at times treacherous. During the ebb, it always draws you away to a distance, and you have great difficulty to reach the shore again, when you have ventured out too far. One day, a beautiful English woman, too confident in the dominion which her country assumes over this element, had swum to some distance into the sea, and when she attempted to return her strength soon failed her in the unwonted exertion. Her cry for help made such an impression



on the ladies present that they immediately hurried out of the water, to watch in safety from the shore the tragic event that was preparing, while others loudly echoed her call. Two young men, the only swimmers present, who were already in their machines, sallied forth instantaneously, plunged into the water, and in a few minutes brought the fair stranger, half dead with fright, if nothing else, in triumph to the shore. On the following day, one of these two, a friend of mine, had the good fortune to save three ladies at once. This time it was flood-tide, which is mischievous too, and was trying whether it could succeed better in catching its prey than the ebb had done the day before. At the place where the flood has reached its highest point, it generally scoops out the ground to the depth of some feet. Beyond this hollow commences the level sandy beach, which I have described above. On that day, three young ladies had been bathing quietly on this plain while the flood was gradually rising. When they attempted to return to the shore, the water in this hollow was above their heads and cut off their retreat. The nearer they approached the shore, the deeper the water became. Cries of distress were their only resource. The ladies on the shore ran in their alarm to and fro, and the cry for help, echoed from every mouth, was all the assistance they could afford. My friend came up just at this moment, and if, on the preceding day, he had forgotten to put on his bathing drawers, he had now forgotten to fling off the

gown, plunged into the sea, and brought to shore the three females, who had already lost their footing when he reached them. A few seconds later and they must have perished.—On account of such accidents, let men and women continue to bathe together, as they have hitherto done.

Another danger, but only for such as are somewhat too bold, and prefer a rather rough sea for bathing, is the surf. One day, when the sea did not appear to me rougher than usual, being fond of its agitation, I had confidently consigned myself to it, and indulged in the delightful exercise of flying swimming, or swimming flying. My heart had rejoiced in the joyousness of the billows. It did not occur to me that I was alone, and that most of those who had come to bathe had been deterred from venturing; for the luxury of the enjoyment was too great for me to think of any thing else. But when I wanted to return to the shore, I soon perceived why I was the only bather. Either the sea was higher when I went into the water than it had been the day before, or it had become more stormy while I was bathing. Be this as it may, when I attempted to reach the shore, every time that I gained a footing, the surf upset and flung me into the next wave. The first time I laughed along with the spectators standing on the shore; so I did the second time, but the laugh was not quite so hearty; at a third attempt, I began to feel uncomfortable and ceased laughing; and the fourth time I was on the point of pronouncing an emphatic

curse upon the laughers, when a fresh wave enveloped me and cut short the imprecation. In this manner, I made ten or twelve attempts to gain the shore, but to no purpose, and at every fresh trial the sea became more agitated—at least so it seemed to me—and the harsh voice of the waves more jeering. I felt that I should not be able to continue the conflict much longer. To recover myself, I swam back out of the surf, and not till then did I bethink me of the ropes, and could not conceive how it happened that they had not occurred to me at first. I swam to the spot where there was one of these, waited till a retreating wave allowed me to perceive it, and with its assistance reached the shore, the sea breaking over me several times by the way. I must confess that I was heartily glad when I once more had terra firma under me, and could stand upright, and that I seriously resolved to be more cautious in future. To this resolution I have steadfastly adhered, though it has often grieved me to the heart to be obliged to deny myself the luxury of a stormy sea-bath.



## CHAPTER X.

Environs of Havre—The Shipbuilders' Yards—Francis I—Le Perry—The Quarter of the Gobelins—Cemetery of the Protestants—St. Adresse—Anecdote of Bernardin de St. Pierre—La Hève—The Lighthouses—Cemetery of the Catholics—Graville—Church—Music—Convent of Graville—Advice of Pierre Legardin—The Côte d'Ingouville; a place of great resort in May for the purpose of drinking milk before breakfast—Ingouville — The Hospital.

THE bright sun, shining into my bed-room, invited me out early this morning. I had long wished to revisit some places which I had already seen; and where I had paid homage to that God who lives in Nature, and through it draws nigh unto us. My route led me out by the gate of Le Perrey to the sea-shore. The sea was tranquil, and rejoiced with me at the sight of the smiling face of that glorious luminary which had been so long veiled from us. In the road lay a great number of vessels; and among them five whalers, which had sailed eight, ten, and twelve months ago, and the crews of which had lived all that time in their nut-shells between sky and ocean. The last that had arrived was celebrating the happy termination of her voyage, and by firing her guns proclaiming her return to friends

and relations dwelling in the town. Unluckily, I too often have witnessed the brutal joy of these seamen returning home after a twelvemonth's absence, to indulge those poetical feelings which these glad-some sounds would otherwise have excited in my mind. The thought, however, that in one or other of the cabins of *Le Perrey* the heart of a fond mother might throb more vehemently at the sound of these guns, somewhat cheered me and diverted me from my moody meditations. But, to a certainty, many more prostitutes of Havre were waiting with impatience for the landing of the crew, than mothers, sisters, and sweethearts.

My morning-walk led me along the sea-shore towards the north, and, in the first place, past the shipbuilders' yards. Here the sturdy carpenters were already at work, and clambering about the skeletons of the future conquerors of the terrible element. The bustle that prevails in these yards is always a pleasing sight. The half-finished vessels, the destiny which awaits them, which brings happiness or misery upon so many families, and which bids them traverse the ocean amid perils and tempests, give wide scope to the imagination. On the strand, close to the stocks, lay the wreck of an old vessel; which had been driven ashore by the last storm, and from which workmen were tearing the shattered planks to be used for fuel. Thus, all through life, the cradle and the coffin are close together.

Upon the stocks here are born the giants of the



deep. They are there christened, and these christenings are truly jovial scenes. The godfather, the godmother, and all the friends of the parent, celebrate the auspicious day; and I doubt much whether most of the shipbuilders and shipowners look forward, at the birth and baptism of a son or daughter, with such joy and hope as at the birth and baptism of a child, not sprung from their own loins, but created and animated by the breath of their soul—money. And I would lay any wager that a shipowner would be far more shocked to hear of the wreck of his ship—that is to say, if she were not insured—than to stand before the wreck of what was once his son. The great shipowners who have large families of this kind are not so fond of them as those who have but one child, the fishermen, for instance, who live on board from year's end to year's end, and come on shore only from time to time. These dote upon their vessels; every plank is endeared to them; they become identified with their boat; and, let the storm rage ever so furiously, they will not quit her till the inexorable element assails her with a force that defies resistance. I have known some such fishermen, who, having lost their vessels, dragged out the remainder of their lives in profound melancholy, or strove to drown their sorrow for the loss by addicting themselves to drink. One I saw who had actually lost his reason; who, in his mental aberration, lamented over his vessel as a forsaken woman would over her faithless lover, whose desertion has broken her heart but not distracted

her brain. I know not whether this ought to be called the force of habit; but a terrible idea often darted across my mind, when I saw how men, the imaginary gods of the earth, are attached to a plank, and how the lofty mind, which has the presumption to attempt to control the raging element, is wrecked when that plank is shattered against a rock.

In this dockyard that gallant monarch, Francis I. caused a colossal ship of war to be built, which was to perpetuate his name upon the sea, as Havre was to do upon land. But the sea was not more favourable to this royal perpetuity than *terra firma*. The giant vessel, Francis I., in which were a chapel, a foundry, cellars, and kitchens, and even a windmill, performed the long voyage, from the spot where she was built to the entrance of the harbour, about a thousand paces, and was stranded there upon the sand, where the scornful waves played with the windmill of royal perpetuity, till one day, becoming furious, they dashed the ship in pieces, and cast the wreck upon the shore. The sand of the sea, though driven hither and thither by the flood, is permanent, but the name written upon it by the mightiest of puny mortals is washed away by the next wave. Mankind alone has a past and a future, a philosophy and a history; but all we know of men is, that here and there one wrote his name at low water in the sand, conceiving that he had founded for himself an imperishable monument. What, then, were the names of the builders of the pyramids, which tell that the race of moles once burrowed there near the surface of the earth?

The Spirit which gives law to that sea, which commanded it to rise and to fall, alone lives for ever !

Between the dockyards and the town are a great number of cabins built of wood, a sort of village called Le Perrey. The small crazy huts, mostly inhabited by fishermen, ship-carpenters, brick-makers, as well as the many liquor and cider shops, lead one to infer that their inmates do not belong precisely to the *élite* of the human race ; but also that, in the hours which their labour allows them for rest, they strive, in defiance of Fate, to forget their unfortunate situation. The immorality of the lower classes of the people is, in general, rather the consequence of their wretchedness and destitution, than of their rudeness and of the want of education and instruction. He alone saves, he alone leads a regular life, who, at the end of the week, the month, the year, hopes at least to see what he has been saving for. Misery and want hold a sort of revel every night ; the morrow has no hope for them but that of getting a bellyful again at night, if, however, it has this. Hence it is, that the necessitous wretch, whenever Fate smiles more kindly upon him, flings himself into the arms of oblivious indulgence, and lives an hour in which he has no need to think of the wants of the morrow. How comes it that in Paris none but the labouring people of the very lowest class are to be seen every Sunday at the Barrières, giving themselves up like brutes to the indulgence of the animal appetites, while such as work at trades by which they can



earn rather more than their daily bread are scarcely ever to be found there? The former there hold their Sunday carouse, to prepare themselves for the execution that is repeated every week. I do not imagine that they think so, because they never think; but I believe that they feel so; and, if they should ever learn to speak, they will reason so. If any one could put an end to poverty and distress, he would give the death-blow to vice and crime. If men would use their eyes to see, the simple circumstance, that among one hundred criminals two-thirds have always been impelled by necessity to transgress, would suffice to induce them to strive not to destroy the evil itself, but to extirpate its cause, its root. They imagine that they can get rid of the nettles by cutting them down, and leave the roots in the ground to send up stronger shoots than ever. There is but one sound theory of penal law, namely, that which seeks the cause of crime, the motive, and destroys it. But this can only be done by humanity, kindness, and, above all, a little common sense—all contraband goods at the present day.

Poverty is a cruel misfortune. The very air which the bird breathes in its purity becomes pestilential for the poor. In large cities this is the order of the day. Here, in a village, the same circumstances struck me more strongly than in towns, for there we are accustomed to it. The brick-kilns in Le Perrey continually impregnate the air with sulphureous effluvia, which attack the

lungs, and excite cough, so that whoever is not obliged to dwell or to stay there takes care to get out of their vicinity as speedily as possible.

Beyond the brick-kilns is the quarter of the Gobelins. Here, perhaps, was once a manufactory of the tapestry invented by the celebrated Gobelin. But I should not like to set myself in opposition to that most veracious authority—popular tradition. This says that the *Gobelins* (goblins) are heathen gods or christian devils, who played their pranks here many centuries ago, to whom their votaries sacrificed from time to time, at midnight, a black cock, at the cross-road hard by, and then joined with them in all sorts of wild revels. I have nothing to say against black cocks; but they, as well as evil spirits, seem to have become very scarce. So much is quite certain, that the devil used to stop here in his rounds about midnight, and refresh himself with a black cock, which was brought for him by way of heriot, or as some other token of his lordship paramount and the vassalage of his votaries. The devils are deposed; I had almost said, the devil has fetched the devils; and unless Messieurs the Protestants, who have chosen for themselves a resting-place very near this decried cross-road and made a cemetery there, lose in the narrow house somewhat of their prosaic way of thinking, and now and then get up a dance at midnight, like honest Christian Roman Catholics, the poetry of the once so merry cross-road ball will stand a fair chance of being consigned to oblivion.



Beyond this cross-road and the cemetery, you come to a spot commanding a view which, in the fine season, is surpassed by very few that I am acquainted with. Before us is the sea, bounded by the blue horizon and the road of Havre, in which a hundred vessels, large and small, are frequently lying at once. On the left are seen the town, the pier, and the dockyard, and farther off, in the background, the hills of Calvados, stretching like a dark blue island into the sea. On the right are the rocks of La Hève, and facing these rocks, the pleasant little village of St. Adresse.

Whenever I attempt to describe a landscape, I feel the truth of the old rule, which forbids us to botch up one art with another. And yet, I would fain communicate the feelings that have so often animated me on this spot. St. Adresse is situated in a small quiet valley, at the outlet of which the boundless sea expands before us. The little cottages are half covered by fruit-trees, and the church or chapel is partly embosomed in the valley, and tells only by the top of the spire that here, too, is a place where men feel constrained to acknowledge at times their own nothingness. The profoundest repose seems to pervade village and valley, as well as the contiguous rocks of La Hève, which shelter it from the north and east winds, which the sea has been assailing for thousands of years, and from which it now and then washes away a few feet; and lastly, beside this repose of the little valley and village, the ever new life of the sea, often lashed into fury

by the tempest. I have at times sought to discover the secret of beauty, and have smiled at the solution of the riddle by means of curved lines ; but I have as often lost the clue when I fancied that it could not fail to lead me to the goal. This, however, I have often felt—that contrast is at least one of the laws of the beautiful. The boy along with the aged man, the wife on the arm of the husband, the tempest and the struggle against it, danger and the courage to defy it, repose, energy, and busy life, beside one another, excite us, awaken in us feelings, ideas, elevate us ; and then we are astonished, and admire the beauty that lies in this diversity. And even in unity, this variety, these contrasts, may be concealed : rest itself may call forth the remembrance of movement, peace that of the conflict, as we perceive in the contemplation of the placid sea. A veteran whose features are furrowed with age may make us call to mind his former vigour, his courage, his noble disposition. Why do we admire as beautiful a ruin, from whose cleft wall shoots forth a young tree, around which clings the fresh ivy ? The single figure of a female can express these contrasts, when we discern in her features the impress of woman, weakness, angelic purity ; whose eye sparkles with the fire of first love, whose lips are crimsoned by the first virgin kiss, or the chaste remembrance of it. I mean not to say that contrast, change, are the key to the secret of beauty, but to a certainty they are one of its laws.

We meet with the most glaring contrasts in hilly

countries, and still more on hilly sea-shores. Hence it is, that we call so many prospects there beautiful. But rarely are they more conspicuous than at St. Adresse, where the village is a picture of soothing sabbath repose, the sea an image of ever agitated life, and yon rock, La Hève, that of the conflict of the two elements—idyl, epic, and drama, interwoven together. For hours have I stood here, or reclined on the grass, indulging pleasing reveries, or devising subjects for others.

The sea is making inroads upon the village, too. I remarked how much nearer the houses were to the narrow path which runs along the margin of the cliff than they were the last time I was here, above a year ago, because the former path had been undermined, and washed away in several places. History tells of a village situated several hundred years since about a league off, and which the sea has converted into an abode of fishes. This village, to which St. Adresse owes its origin, was called, in its time, St. Denis Chef des Caux. The sea has swallowed up the village, and time and enlightenment have thrust St. Denis from his high station. He could not even protect his own church. But how a St. Adresse, who is not to be found in the Roman Catholic calendar, came to be set up in his stead, is a very pretty story.—The sea was very rough one day, and was driving a ship with a violence that nothing but courage and skill can withstand, towards the coast of St. Denis, as the village was still called. The greater the danger the more



the crew became dispirited, and the captain alone retained his presence of mind. The crew and the pilot saw but one resource; they desisted from their exertions, and fell on their knees to implore the protection of St. Denis. The vessel left to herself only drove the more rapidly towards the rocks. The captain was furious, and stormed louder than the sea. "Ye asses!" he cried, "don't you see that while you are on your knees, the ship is only hurrying the more swiftly to destruction?" He threatened one, coaxed another, pulled up a third from his knees, and hurled him towards the helm. "If any thing can save us," said he, "it is only the assistance of St. Adresse (la sainte adresse), and without that we must be inevitably lost." The men began again to exert themselves; the vessel was carried past the most dangerous places, and at length weathered the storm. St. Denis was deposed, *Sainte Adresse* was made the patron of the village in his stead, and is said to have since wrought many other manifest miracles.

But even she has not yet been able to prevent the encroachments of the sea, which, from year to year, contracts the space upon which the village stands; and who knows whether it may not some day engulf the church of the new saint, as it did of yore that of St. Denis! Till then, however, the quiet, peaceful village will console, for a few hours, many a wanderer weary of life, by its sabbath stillness and solemnity.

Bernardin de Saint Pierre, author of "Paul and

Virginia," one day took it into his head to turn hermit here. He belonged not to the class of persons who are weary of life, for he was but nine years old; and boy-suicides were not then in fashion, as among the precocious youth of our present age, in which the children seem to assume the part of men, and the men that of children. He knew as yet no other trouble than that of having received a rather severe lecture from his schoolmaster. The threat of punishment one day produced such an effect, that the young sinner resolved to do penance, and to turn hermit, that he might escape, in the first place school, and in the next, all the persecutions and seductions of the world. Accordingly, turning his back on the school, he set out in quest of a spot sufficiently solitary for his purpose. His pilgrimage had lasted about an hour, when the young truant, having reached the wood behind St. Adresse, conceived that he was in a real wilderness, and resolved there to commence his life of seclusion from the world. The day was delightful; the birds sang their liveliest songs; the great heart of the little hermit understood their language, swelled with delight, and rejoiced at having burst the fetters of the world and of school, and gained perfect liberty. Blackberries were naturally the first meal of the recluse, and, having made his supper of the same fruit, he set about building himself a little hut of boughs. The hermitage was not quite finished, when he heard at a distance the voice of his faithful nurse and attendant, Marie Palbot, calling his



name. He could not imagine how she had found out his retreat, and the first impression made upon him by the voice of his kind Marie, who had always been so fond of him, was to penetrate further into the wood and hide himself from her. But the voice came nearer and nearer, and Bernardin soon heard that the calls were interrupted by weeping and sobbing. His heart was not proof against this; he hastened to her, threw himself into her arms, comforted her, and wiped the tears that trickled down her cheeks and his own. How could he have forsaken the world, if he had loved only his good Marie Palbot, and not a creature besides, and been loved by none but her! And he, the future author of "Paul and Virginia," loved all the world, every human being, every bird, every tree, every flower.

The anecdote alone would sufficiently demonstrate his vocation. He became—his heart and his imagination pointing the way—he became the most feeling writer of France; nay, I cannot help thinking that in the works of Bernardin de St. Pierre is to be found a confirmation of my notion that centuries have not wholly effaced in the French Normans their German origin. Not one other French writer has shown so profound a comprehension and feeling of nature as he, and as a hundred German writers have done. To him every tree, every plant, are friends, who surround him, whom he fosters and cherishes, and with whom he has made a contract. And the preceding anecdote itself is quite German: it betrays that feeling which drives

the German from his home, and thrills him when he hears the leaves above his head relating the secret stories of the loves of the fairies, and of the horrors of the *erl-king* and his daughters. Paul and Virginia is a long forgotten old Norman story translated into French.

A little wood, which I was obliged to pass through in order to ascend to the lighthouses, was so still, so quiet, that I could easily conceive how the rich fancy of the young St. Pierre might take this or a similar place for a wilderness ; and I rested myself in it for a while, to give free scope to the feelings which this anecdote had excited in me, and to carry myself back in imagination to those peaceful days, when I too could play truant for a few hours, and in a garden or a coppice, far, far away from home, fancy myself a sort of Robinson Crusoe in a solitary island.

The way from this wood to the lighthouses on the Hève is monotonous enough. But there a boundless prospect opens upon you : the sea lies spread out at your feet. There are few points where sunset affords a more beautiful sight, and I wish I could describe how beautiful I have often seen it here.

The lighthouses are massive, square, prosaic towers, in the style of the last century. A keen cutting wind prevailed on the heights, and this, with the exception of the prospect, with which, however, the lighthouses have nothing to do, is all that I have to say of the latter, unless I add that in

one of them there is a collection of shells, where you may pay a handsome price for one, as you cannot think of giving the keeper's son the trouble to go up to the top with you for nothing.

Here too Francis I. purposed to make a display of his glory. From this spot he resolved to review his fleet, which was collected to convey the *grande armée* of the *grand roi* to England. To this end, a triumphal arch had been constructed here with boughs and flowers. But this time he had no better luck than usual: the balls from the English fleet spoiled the sport, and obliged him to sheer off. There is nothing so ridiculous as conceited mediocrity aping greatness. So the god of history seems to have thought in regard to Francis I., for, whenever this monarch prepares to show himself in all his glory, he trips up his heels, and laughs scornfully at him as he lies sprawling on the ground.

I have often made a circuit to avoid going over the same ground twice. A footpath leads down from the lighthouses, and I would advise all who come after me to take it in descending. It leads by a rapid declivity to the foot of the Hève, where a new spectacle presents itself. Beyond and around us lie scattered blocks, as though broken from the rock by some giant, for the purpose of building himself a house with them. The power of the sea is abundantly manifested here. Besides, these blocks riven from their parent rocks are frequently grouped in the most picturesque manner, and I recollect a sunset here, which was one of the most



exquisite pictures that I ever beheld in the workshop of the greatest of masters. I stood facing two masses of rock as high as a house, which bounded the view on the right and left; and beyond this pass opened a prospect over the sea studded with shipping; at the distant horizon the orb of day was descending to his ocean-bath, crimsoning the sea and gilding the clouds. The finest painting is but schoolboy's work in comparison with this scene.

The weather, which early in the morning had been so delightful and seemed to promise the beginning of spring, threatened to change. The sky again became gradually clothed in gray, its ivory for the last six months, and I therefore quickened my pace as I returned towards the town. By the way, the nets set up in a circle in which the fish are caught at flood-tide and left behind at low water, reminded me of the idea of the abbé Diguetmarre, who proposed to establish a menagerie of inhabitants of the deep at the foot of the Hève. He was a century too early with his plan.

My way led me again past the cemetery of the Protestants, but on a different side of it, and afterwards by that of the Catholics. This is situated in a plain; and the little chapels, the numerous crosses, the flowers, and the weeping willows which adorn the graves, give it a poetical aspect: but it is a pity that it lies so low that the dead deposited here are literally drowned, for they lie two or three feet deep in water. Concerning this cemetery is told one of those stories which, like the holy three kings,

have more than one head, and are to be met with in different places. It is no other than the celebrated Cologne tradition of a sexton cutting off the finger of a deceased lady, after she had been buried, for the sake of the gold ring that was upon it, and thus waking her from the sleep of death. At that time, of course, the water could not have covered the coffins, as it does at present. But miracles do not stick about such trifles. The Cologne version has some additional circumstances. The incredulous husband, when his wife knocks at the house-door, and he is told that she is come back, replies: "That is as impossible as that my horses should be in the garret gaping out at the windows." And when this impossibility was nevertheless found to be possible, he had his horses carved in wood and placed them at his windows, as a memorial of the wonder. Here at Havre the affair is rather more prosaic, and not half so awful, for the wooden horses, which stood for several hundred years at the windows as evidences of the fact, are no longer in existence.

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One of the most interesting excursions from Havre is to Graville. Several roads lead thither. One of them runs along the canal from Havre to Harfleur: another is the *route neuve*, constructed a few years since, which connects Havre with Ingouville.

How rapidly Havre increases may be inferred



from the circumstance that the value of the ground on each side of this new road has trebled in the space of ten years, so that the person by whom it was purchased is now a very wealthy man. A great number of new houses, which have lately sprung up here, prove that the fortifications do not permit all whose business lies in the town to reside there.

From this route the Paris highroad runs off to Gravelle. The village which some scholars will have to be the celebrated and lost town Catæorium, which occurs in the Itinerary of the Antonines, is considered by others as the ancient Gerald's Villa. Let them fight it out. The matter is of the utmost importance.

The first Normans who landed in France destroyed the village. But, as its situation at the mouth of the Seine was advantageous for pirates, there was soon erected on its site a fortified castle, which covered the retreat of the Normans, who penetrated farther into the country. This castle belonged at a later period to the counts of Gravelle, who were the feudal lords of the whole surrounding country, and as such acted a not unimportant part in the history of Normandy. The castle afterwards passed into the hands of the clergy, who turned it into an abbey; till at length the revolution came, swept away castle and convent, and gave the land to the peasants to cultivate, and the remaining monastic buildings to the mayor for the benefit of the commune.

Such is the brief history of the place; it is much

the same as that of France and Europe ; for as in the insect may be traced the vital energy of animals in general, so in every stone whose history has been preserved may be found that of the whole world. But it was not precisely these lessons in natural history and philosophy that I meant to propound. I have something else to do ; to feast myself upon an enchanting prospect, upon the beauties of nature, to which all philosophy is cold, bald, and naked.

Before us opens the bed of the Seine, many miles in width. Harfleur and the hills behind it as far as Quillebeuf bound the prospect. At our feet lies the most luxuriant vegetation in the beautiful valley which the land has won from the Seine and the sea ; on the left, Havre, at the extremity of this valley, and beyond Havre the sea. Vessels from all parts of the world are hastening to the town ; the masts of those in the basins overtop the churches, which seem to bow before them, by way of doing homage to the supremacy of commerce. In the valley itself, the sturdy husbandman is at work, ploughing his fields ; in the hills behind us resounds the woodman's axe, and the dark, gray sails of the fishing-vessels stud the Seine and the sea. All that there is exciting, all that there is animating for human society, is comprised within the small compass of a few miles ; and the imagination has here scope sufficient to consider life on every side.

History has preserved certain circumstances,

which, if a single glance at the spot did not afford room to infer the fact, and an examination of the ground did not place it beyond doubt—prove that the walls of the castle of Gravelle, which would now be seated on the middle of the hill, if it had not been superseded by a terrace commanding a most magnificent prospect, were washed a thousand years ago by the waves of the sea and the Seine. In the walls of the ancient castle were to be seen, scarcely a century since, the great iron rings to which ships were moored. History says moreover that the Normans laid up their vessels for the winter in the ditches, or the harbour, of Gravelle, and that, at the time of Lothair, son of Louis the Gentle, the ships of the Normans assembled there when he summoned them to his assistance against Louis of Bavaria and Charles the Bald. In 1525, the sea strove to wrest from the land what it had gradually acquired; it rushed during a violent storm to the walls of the castle, and upset twenty-eight fishing vessels in these ditches, by way of protesting against their right of possession. But this protest was of little avail. When the storm was over, the land retained its usurped right, and between Gravelle and the Seine now lies a fertile plain some leagues in breadth, and between Gravelle and the sea the town of Havre and the village of Ingouville. Thus what the sea rends from the cliff of La Hève, the land here regains doubly and trebly. Leaving the learned to quarrel about the cause of this phenomenon, I content myself with the idea that, at my feet, where of yore the



fisherman cast out his net, the husbandman now reaps abundant harvests.

The church of Graville is very ancient, and may have some interest for the architect. It is as like a hundred more, that I have seen in different places, if not as one egg is to another, at least as one cock is to another. I recollect to have seen and heard in it but one thing worth mentioning, and from the like to which may Heaven preserve every musical ear! One Sunday, the fine weather having invited me abroad, I walked to the terrace of Graville to enjoy the prospect. I arrived there rather fatigued with my little excursion; and, after I had performed on the terrace my Sunday devotions to that God who preaches so impressively in flowers, trees, hills, rivers, and seas, I suffered myself to be enticed to the church, that I might rest upon one of the chairs which are to be hired there. It was some particular festival. The church was crowded. The evening service soon commenced, and with it an infernal torment for the ears, which soon made me forget my weariness and drove me out again into the open air. Very few churches in France have an organ; its place is supplied in general by what are called *serpents*, a sort of roaring lions, seeking what poor soul they may devour. On account of the festival, the aid of a second serpent from some neighbouring place had been obtained. The moment the priest stepped up to the altar, both commenced their horrid din. As if the natural dog-howl and bull-roar of these accursed instruments were not enough, one of them



was always half a note higher or lower than the other. And this racket was accompanied with the screeching of two or three hundred women, and the grunting of half-a-dozen thorough-basses. I have heard the wind howling in the rigging of vessels; I once heard the excited populace in Paris vent their fury in shouts and yells; but here the good people prayed to Heaven, here they sang a hymn of praise to the Almighty, to which all the horrible and frightful noises I had ever before heard were a real treat for the ear. The trial was too severe; after the first minutes, I hurried out of the church, to escape this purgatory.

The general relish for art prevailing among the Greeks is attributed to the numerous works of art which they had opportunities of contemplating at every step. Whoever has been but once in a French village church need not ask the reason why the French have the least taste of any people in the world for singing or music. If with such music they were to acquire a musical ear, then verily I should not despair of morality, if the devil himself were to turn schoolmaster and give lessons in it.

But one thing was clear to me. The people believe that formerly a wonder-working image in this church possessed the power of restoring the sense of hearing to deaf seamen, who had lost that faculty in storms at sea or by the thunder of the cannon; and I have not the least doubt of the miracle, if there is a word of truth in Hahnemann's theory. But Heaven defend those who can hear from this antidote to deafness!

Behind the church, in the courtyard of the *mairie*, are to be seen the cellars of the monks, hewn out of the rock, which are said to have been dungeons at an earlier period under the counts of Graville. This reform I most cordially approve. Commend me to the pious monks, their cellar, and their wine. They led a jovial life, did those good friars. In the last century, there were but four or five of them in the convent, which had a net revenue of 40,000 francs. Brother Pierre Legardin was one of the oldest, and yet one of the heartiest and jolliest. A priest in the neighbourhood wrote to him, inquiring by what means he contrived to be so hale and vigorous at his advanced age. His reply was as follows :—" My dear brother, I am to-day one hundred and four years old, and am writing to you by the light of my lamp. I have lived virtuously, and recommend to you to follow the diet which I adopted at your age. [The inquirer was eighty years old.] Add every day to your usual allowance a bottle of good wine, and God will preserve you who are so useful to your flock. That is, my dear Jules, the sincere wish of your brother, Pierre Legardin."

Beyond the churchyard, a steep, narrow road, between green hedges, leads up the hill till you come to a second road, which runs over a sort of elevated plain to the *Côte* of Ingouville. This road is, for a while, very beautiful. Green hedges and fruit-trees, on either side, meet over-head, and form a shady alley. From time to time, openings

in these hedges afford views of the lovely valley of the Seine or the sea. Here you see the Byzantine Gothic church of Graille, with a Gothic cross before it, the churchyard around it in the foreground, and behind it the valley, the Seine, and the hills; there a straw-thatched cottage, and again in the back-ground, the valley, the Seine, the hills, Havre, and the sea. Thus at every step you have a different prospect, ever beautiful, ever new, and ever varying, with the repose of the *chiaro-scuro*, in which the shady road envelops you. At length this alley opens, and then you see before you, on the right, the somewhat monotonous elevated plain, and on the left a long wall which protects the gardens and summer-houses, and intercepts all prospect of the valley, till you come to a spot where an iron gate opens a view into an alley which runs down the hill, and beyond which you catch a glimpse of the Seine and the valley.

At length you come to the highest houses of Ingouville. The wealthier merchants of the wealthy commercial town have here built a number of palaces, where they enjoy themselves in summer after the toils of the day. Many English live in those which the owners are willing to let, that they may thus make money even of their villas. Almost the whole upper part of Ingouville consists of such summer residences; and it would be difficult to find a more delightful situation. As the ascent is pretty steep, every window commands views over vale and hill, river and sea, town and village. But, at the top of the hill, at the end of the street, which runs



past these villas, you have once more an unobstructed view of the sea, the town, the Seine and its hilly banks, which, beautiful as all may be that you have seen before, appears again new, again sublime. Here, beneath shady trees, whose boughs hang down to your head, are placed seats to rest yourself; many an evening have I accepted their invitation, and while my eye roved over the expansive sea, imagination has accompanied the vessels leaving the port to other regions of the globe. A spring morning, or a summer evening here, is a treat on which you may feast all your life, if you have fancy enough to call up again the exquisite scene that this spot presented to you.

It is customary in Havre, for every one who can anyhow, to go about five in the morning, from the first to the last day of May, to the Côte d'Ingouville, to drink new milk before breakfast. May milk is reputed to be extremely wholesome. I, for my part, cannot sufficiently extol the sagacious doctor who first prescribed it; but his Havre colleagues have great reason to grumble, for a whole apothecary's shop is scarcely capable of counteracting the beneficial effects produced by such a morning walk, the delightful prospect, and the new milk. While I most punctually followed this prescription, I regretted nothing so sincerely as that every day was not Sunday; for then all was here life and bustle, and the people were tripping, and skipping, and jumping about with such glee as might well drive all the medical faculty of Paris and Montpellier to despair, were they but to witness it.



On my return, I passed through Ingouville, a kind of suburb to Havre, from which it is separated only by the fortifications, and which, sooner or later, must, to a certainty, be united with the town. Ingouville is said to have been formerly a fishing village; and now Havre and its immediate environs lie between it and the sea. At present the place is chiefly composed of new houses, and there is nothing about it to indicate that this was once the site of the wretched huts of fishermen. The history of Ingouville is wholly unimportant: there is nothing worthy of record except the hospital. This institution was formerly under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Rouen, who set himself in opposition to the military authorities of Havre. The prelate cared not if the sick soldiers died without attendance, and, with most Christian charity, forbade them to be admitted into the hospital. The military commandant, taking a different view of the matter, early one morning ordered his grenadiers to invest the hospital. It surrendered on capitulation; the grenadiers took possession of the rooms, carried their ailing comrades into them, and, with the bayonet, which was in fashion already in those days, forced the Fathers of Mercy to wait upon the sick. History is an incessant contradiction, a series of discords, the solution of which he alone finds, who knows how to combine them into a whole. He sees how the musket and the bayonet must support the interests of humanity, when those who are called to its service neglect their duty. Folly is the best promoter of truth.

## CHAPTER XI.

Harfleur — Historical Facts — Causes of the Decline of the Town — Orcher — The Chateau and Park — The latter generously thrown open to the public by the owner — Gambols there — Montivilliers — Magnificent Views from the surrounding Hills — Rouelles ; Great number of infants nursed there — Gournay — Prevalence of beggary at Montivilliers, owing to the Convent formerly existing there — Its Corn-market — Keeness of Norman peasants.

I HAD promised to go on St. Anne's day to Orcher, where Antoine, with his friends and relatives, was to celebrate the cabinetmakers' festival. Being detained in the forenoon by business, I could not join him till the afternoon. A sort of omnibus carried me to Harfleur, and I got a glimpse, as I passed through it, of that once famous and flourishing commercial town. There is, indeed, scarcely any thing to be seen there, excepting the church and a sugar-baker's; and as the former, though a bold and handsome edifice, resembles very many churches in Normandy, and the latter is as like all other establishments of the kind as one egg is to another, I could gratify my curiosity without apprehension of missing our festival. The only re-

markable thing that I know about the church is this couplet of Casimir Delavigne's :

Le clocher de Harfleur, debout pour vous apprendre  
Que l'Anglais l'a bati mais n'a pu le defendre.

Why the English could not defend it, we are not told by the "History of Harfleur." The Normans, who had once conquered the English, would not be conquered and still less ruled by them, even after they had become half Normans themselves. A people need but to will, and the thing is done. Henry V., of England, had taken Harfleur, and reduced great part of Normandy. The resistance made by Harfleur, which did not surrender while a mouthful was left in the town, exasperated the king to such a degree that he took sixteen hundred families and carried them to Calais, where they were to be embarked, after they had delivered up all their property to the conqueror, as the price of their liberty. He then ordered the charters of the town to be publicly burned in the market-place, and issued a law disqualifying every inhabitant of Harfleur to possess in fee, or to inherit, any house in the town, and conferring that right on persons born in England alone. No better means, indeed, could have been devised for perpetuating hatred against England in Harfleur and Normandy. For twenty years the people of Harfleur endured this tyranny. They hoped for succour from the king of France, but hoped in vain : at length they resolved to right themselves. One hundred and four



townsmen of Harfleur conspired with the inhabitants of the environs, the peasants of the Pays de Caux, as a portion of the department of the Lower Seine was formerly denominated. One morning, these confederates fell upon the guard at the gates, which they threw open, and drove out those of the garrison who had the good luck to escape the first outbreak of their fury. Five years afterwards, in 1436, the English once more took the town with a strong army, but they retained it for only a short time, and were then obliged to quit the country for ever.

In honour of those one hundred and four brave fellows, every morning at sunrise the same number of tolls were given on the bell of Harfleur, down to the time of the Revolution; and I cannot conceive, for my part, what grounds of objection could have induced the Revolution to abolish this venerable custom.

At a still earlier period, in 1346, Harfleur was taken by the English, just at the moment when the town was equipping a fleet to attack them. The seamen of Harfleur subsequently took a signal revenge, destroying the English fleet in 1382, and again in 1410. Lastly, they lent their ships to the earl of Richmond, afterwards Henry VII., when he sailed from this port with two thousand men for England, to prosecute his claim to the crown. The people of Harfleur were, upon the whole, excellent seamen, as is proved, not only by their victories, but by their voyages and discoveries. In 1503,



Gonneville, a mariner of this town, discovered some of the Australian islands.

From all these facts the former importance of the place may be inferred. It was once the principal port of France, and was frequented by Spaniards, Portuguese, English, and Dutch, who brought thither their commodities. The frequent wars themselves could not destroy its prosperity. A still more powerful foe arose against it, and bade the sea retire, so that its port was no longer accessible. For a time the vessels landed their cargoes for Harfleur at the port of Heure, between it and Havre; but when the latter town was built, Harfleur gradually declined to the state in which it still continues to vegetate. The bustling town was deserted; the warehouses disappeared, and the inhabitants removed to other places. The same town, from which the English once carried off sixteen hundred families, whose harbour was once called *le souverain port de Normandie*, has now scarcely sixteen hundred inhabitants; and instead of wealthy merchants is now to be seen, not exactly poverty, for this is very rare throughout all Normandy, excepting in the former possessions of the Church, but a modest, industrious middle-class, which would be able to give its sovereign, or any one else whom it wished to honour, as splendid a feast as did the merchants of Harfleur three centuries ago to king Francis I.\*

\* In a small work entitled "Antiquités de la Ville de Harfleur," published at Havre in 1799, I have found the bill of fare of

The road from Harfleur to Orcher gradually ascends, and every where affords a fine view of the valley of the Seine and Harfleur. At length you reach the top of the hill, and then find yourself in a village, consisting of public-houses, at the entrance of the park which leads to the château.

The château itself is a modern structure, though its gray colour gives it a look of antiquity. It belongs to Madame de Mortemart, daughter of the marquis de Nogué. It is not remarkable either for its architecture or its history; but, though the antiquary and the historian may pass it coldly by, I advise every lover of Nature, every one who would fain be happy himself, and to see happy beings around him, if he should come into the environs of Havre, not to miss making a pilgrimage hither the first fine Sunday. To the right of the château is

that entertainment, and think that it may prove interesting on more than one account. It is as follows:—

*Grand Repas à l'Hotel de Ville à l'arrivée de François I.*

	frs.	s.
Pour 16 douzaines de pain, à 2 sous le douz. . . . .	1	12
Pour Perdrix, Canards, Videcoqs, Plouviérs, Lapins, Chapons, et autre sauvagins . . . . .	7	14
Deux moutons, à 16 sous pièce . . . . .	1	12
4 Gigots de mouton, à 2 sous 6 den. pièce . . . . .	0	10
6 Tartes, à 3 sous . . . . .	0	18
8 Livres de lard à larder, à 2 sous . . . . .	0	16
1 Douzain de verres à pied . . . . .	0	9
47 Gallons de vin, à 2 sous 6 deniers le pôt . . . . .	14	5
1 Ponchon de vin claret d'Orléans . . . . .	8	0
Depens au Fourrier . . . . .	8	0
Aux laquais du Seigneur Roi . . . . .	6	0
Total . . . . .	49	16

a terrace nearly half a mile in length, carpeted with the finest greensward, shaded by umbrageous chestnut-trees, which commands a view of the Seine, the further bank of the river, the sea, and towards Harfleur and Honfleur, so beautiful, so animated, and so diversified, that it is scarcely to be matched in the finest countries in Europe. And this terrace, this park, swarm on a Sunday with people from far and near, sporting, amusing, and enjoying themselves. I have known many persons, who were called the benefactors of their fellow-citizens; but there are few who have done more good than the noble marquise de Nagu, who has thrown open this beautiful and extensive park to the labourers, the peasants, the sailors, the fishermen, of the environs, and allows them here on the Sunday to forget, for a few hours, the hardships and the cares of life. What is a donation in comparison with this? Had she even given away the whole estate for charitable purposes, and turned the château into an hospital, she would not have conferred half so much happiness as in affording the poor the means of here at times forgetting their poverty. Others give to the indigent a spot two feet wide to die in; she gives them her park to live in, to frolic in, to revel in. It does one good to see how sensible the humble visiters are of this bounty, how every tree, every shrub is respected, and how the rude sailors themselves are scarcely ever mischievous enough to do the least injury.

On the terrace I found my friends, men, women,



and children, playing at touch-tree. They scarcely allowed me time for salutation, obliged me, by way of punishment for coming so late, to act the part of catcher. For this day we were lords and masters of the park, and we allowed the others either to look on unmolested, or to play at their own games. Now a merry band of young people tripped past us dancing; presently loud calls from the thickets were answered by the joyous laugh of children, whom a grave shopkeeper and his spouse were taking out for a walk. We too turned children again, and I fancied more than once that I heard the voice of our stern schoolmaster, who so often surprised us young urchins at this game in the churchyard, and drove us with his cane out of our paradise. Formerly, I could play at this game from morning till night, and the day was not long enough; now, half an hour put my lungs to a severe trial, and I was glad when the seniors of the party—for even these, a grandpapa of seventy-one, and his better half, who had been his partner in life upwards of forty years, forgot their gray hair, and their grandchildren, and played as though they had been not an hour older than the latter—desired a pause.

We threw ourselves in a circle upon the grass, and chatted and laughed away an hour till dinner was ready. In the house where we dined the greatest bustle prevailed. From the windows of the room which our friends had engaged, we could overlook the whole yard, which swarmed with company.



On one side of it was put up a sort of shed, where table stood beside table, with a merry party at each: here, a family, father, grandfather, mother, children, and grandchildren; there, sailors, with their wives and mistresses; yonder another table surrounded by soldiers, and another by labouring men. There was scarcely a spot in the whole spacious yard that was not covered by tables, chairs, and benches: and still there seemed not be room enough for all who thronged to it.

The dinner passed off as dinners generally do. We ate, we drank; there was little talk at first; by and by a witty sally excited a hearty laugh; and at last, at the desert, we were entertained with humorous songs, some of them by Beranger, who is more popular in Normandy than in any other part of France. On leaving the table we returned to the park, and after a short walk a new game was got up—prison-bars. This, like the other, had its mournful side, for it convinced me that since my boyish days I had not made any great advances in agility. Evening stole upon us while thus engaged, and the setting sun summoned us to the terraces to admire the reflections which it threw upon the Seine. A thin vapour rested upon the river and the opposite bank, and was transformed into an airy veil of gold, which, so far from concealing its beauty, only served, as in woman, to heighten its charms.

At length we proceeded in couples, for the game had brought the stragglers together, towards our

quarters. Here and there in the park still prevailed symptoms of the former hilarity ; but as the moon rose these gradually died away. The company in the yard of our public-house was greatly diminished, and a few laggards only were left. These, however, are in general the most unruly guests, and submit to no discipline, no control. An old lame fiddler stood upon a hogshead in a corner of the yard, with an instrument from which he could produce only horribly false tones, and played quadrilles sometimes diversified by a waltz. The sailors and the farming-men from the neighbourhood danced with their girls. Part of our company got up a quadrille in another corner of the yard ; till at length the old folks sounded a retreat, and we returned in an omnibus, amidst jokes, fun, and laughter, to Havre, where we arrived about midnight.

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*Monasterium villare* is the Latin name of Montivilliers, situated two leagues from Havre on the Lezarde. Here was till the revolution a nunnery, indeed a royal abbey. After this I need not say that the environs are enchanting. The Lezarde meanders through a luxuriant valley, between gently rising hills, on which are scattered villas and substantial farm houses, looking down from among the thickets and alleys around them into the vale beneath. On whatever side you ascend these hills from Montivilliers, the sweetest prospect presents

itself. The town, with its gothic-byzantine church, and its walls and towers which have gone to ruin, is mostly the centre of the ever picturesque view, to which the valley, the Lezarde, the meadows and mills, and lastly the hills, with their villas and farm-houses, form a most animated background. The prospect is grander in particular spots, where the eye can take in a wider range, and embrace the Seine and the further bank. At the Ferme aux Muriers, about a mile from Montivilliers, there is a point where, behind an alley of tall beeches, you enjoy a double view. On the right, beside this alley, opens a wide valley, the ground rising on either hand in the form of terraces, enlivened by the little river, intersected in every direction by rows of trees of all kinds, diversified by luxuriant meadows and corn-fields, and bounded by Harfleur and its tall church-steeple. But beyond this extensive foreground, the Seine forms a stripe of gold or silver, according as it is illumined by the sun ; and, beyond this middle distance, animated by the steam-boats pursuing their rapid course up and down, you see the slate roofs of Honfleur glistening in the sun, and behind them the hills bordering the Seine close the prospect. But these varied objects occupy only one half of the picture. Take but two steps, and on the other side, to the left of the beech alley, beneath which we have been standing, appears a new and totally different scene. Here it is not the grandeur of a distant view that astonishes the eye ; a most delicious picture of still life presents itself.



Montivilliers, embosomed among hills, and part of the charming valley of the Lezarde, which winds in fanciful meanders through the meadows, call forth only ideas of quiet and repose; while, on the other side of the alley, we felt a longing to explore the wide space before us, to mingle in the bustle of life. Over-head, meanwhile, tower the proud beeches, which form the frame to both pictures, a temple between whose tall pillars we peep forth, rejoicing in the festival that Nature here holds every day. Minstrels perched on their branches send up strains of joy to heaven, as though they were called to praise God in their simplicity, while our knowledge is struck dumb in astonishment at the beauty of nature. My heart rejoiced with them, but I could no more translate its language than that of the birds, for it belonged just as little as the latter to this life of wants. Nothing but want was the instructor of man when he created language.

Montivilliers is the most agreeable summer abode that can be desired. The town itself is quite rural. Through the principal street runs a streamlet of the most limpid spring water. The environs furnish daily fresh and delightful excursions. The ladies of my friend W——'s family resided here in summer; and almost every Saturday we went to Montivilliers and staid there till Monday morning. Our road frequently led us through Rouëlles, a small quiet village, in a narrow valley. A principal source of profit to this village consists in nursing the infants belonging to the people of the town. It is not



uncommon for a woman to have, besides her own infant, two or even three nurse-children. Accident once led me into a cottage, where I found three such nurses together, who were suckling no fewer than seven children. It is always a touching sight to see a mother nourishing her babe at that fountain which Nature has provided ; but to see that there are people who, as here, make a trade of selling this nutriment, and that there are others who buy it, excited in me such disgust that I could scarcely wait till the person with whom I came had finished his business. This traffic is called an advance in civilisation—it is a gangrene.

From Montivilliers we occasionally made excursions to Gournay, the most peaceful retired valley I ever beheld. On the hill behind Gournay is situated a sort of castle called le Manoir St. Martin, which looks down upon a small valley inclosed on all sides, cut off, as it were, from the rest of the world, which lies before us like an enchanted island, with its streamlet, its farm-houses, its mill, meadows, corn-fields, and coppices. And only two leagues from this tranquil spot, from this undisturbed holiday of nature, the sea with its raging storms and the great commercial town with its greedy passions. It is as though Nature had foreseen that men would labour their whole life in that city to satisfy the cravings of selfishness, and had out of compassion placed these quiet valleys in their way, to receive them at the close of their days, and to prepare them for the death of egotism.

Another circumstance which produces a strong contrast between Havre and Montivilliers and the neighbouring villages is that, in spite of the numerous streams, scarcely any branch of industry is carried on in the latter. Agriculture is in a flourishing state, and most of the farmers are wealthy; but the rest of the inhabitants are poor, nay, many of them beggars. At Montivilliers, whole families live by begging; and from one year's end to another they travel from village to village in quest of their daily bread. I have often found that, as one may expect to meet with fine scenery in the vicinity of a convent, so one finds there more beggars than in other places. Montivilliers was once as flourishing a manufacturing town as Bolbec, or Elbeuf, or Louviers is now. But the more prosperous, the more wealthy, the abbey became, the more the industry of the people decreased; and long before the revolution not a trace was to be found of the former activity of the inhabitants of Montivilliers. The mass lived by the charity of the convent.

After the revolution, attempts were made to remedy this state of things, but all proved fruitless. It is a long time before you can break the people of old customs and usages. There is but one remedy for curing the hereditary sloth of countries which have been under the government of the crozier; that remedy is instruction. And scarcely any where has this remedy been seriously applied, though it has been talked about a great deal for the sake of parade. I am not one of those who consider in-

struction as synonymous with learning to spell and read; for there may be people among whom every child learns to read, and yet continues as ignorant of every thing beyond the circle of daily wants, as though he were the son of a clown of those days when there was no difference between clown and slave. But reading and writing are at least a beginning of improvement, of instruction; they are the door which is opened for them, and at which they will enter, if a pit is not sunk before it, which it would be more difficult for them to get over than to break open the door. At Montivilliers no attempt whatever has been made to open this door for the people. It is the chief place of the canton, and till recently had not a single public school; it now has one opened by the Frères ignorantins, who assuredly will not fail to dig a pit deep and steep enough before it. In France in general, public instruction is in a wretched plight, and, if any one will take the trouble to scrutinize this matter to the bottom, he will find that M. Guizot thoroughly understands the doctrines of absolutism. But private instruction in France is free, and to this the country is indebted for its expansion, if not in breadth at least in height, though it is the former which is in the end of the greater importance and the more permanent benefit.

Montivilliers has a weekly corn-market, from which Havre and part of its environs are supplied, and where purchases are frequently made even for exportation. On these market-days the Norman



peasant may be observed in all his peculiarities of character. A very small number of Jews attend the market, for they have probably learned that they have not always the best of the bargain. It is most difficult to overreach a Norman peasant, for he is always upon his guard, and trick against trick is his motto.

I recollect that one day we were bargaining with a peasant in the vicinity of Montivilliers for a bee-hive, with all the honey and wax that it contained. As we knew not the price of the wax, our ladies wished to have as little wax as possible, and the peasant assured us that the hive contained at most about fifty pounds of honey and one of wax. This seemed to us very unlikely, and, to come at the truth, one of the ladies, who had listened to the conversation at a little distance, stepped up and said that she wanted about five pounds of wax, and she should be glad if the hive contained so much. The peasant now began, with the most innocent look in the world, to say that it was impossible to tell exactly how much wax a hive contains; sometimes there may be more than a pound, perhaps two, three, four, he could not say precisely. Wax was then dear, he added, dearer than honey; and he supposed that the hive might contain two or three pounds, but he could not tell. Thus he continued to waver, as he was uncertain what we wanted. More wax was displeasing to the lady on the right, more honey to the lady on the left. He fairly perspired with anxiety, till we agreed to



take the hive as it was, and he wiped his forehead. Similar scenes frequently occur at the market of Montivilliers. Till the peasant knows with whom he has to do and what the buyer wants, he is reserved and listens without saying a word about his commodity. But, as soon as he has seen or fancies that he has seen the buyer's cards, he is his man, and is sure to have what he wants. The latter, however, is as cautious as himself, and then the point is which shall first make the other speak out. *Oui* and *non* are here almost unknown words, as the proverb says.

Whoever wishes to study the Norman peasants, and has not time to make a long stay in the country, ought by all means to go on a Wednesday to the market of Montivilliers. But whoever is fond of the beauties of nature, whoever wishes to witness the frolics of the beasts of burden of the human world when they get a holiday, let him go thither on a Sunday. Each of them will find it worth the while.

## CHAPTER XII.

Passage from Havre to Honfleur — Grand Views — Legends connected with the Seine and its Banks — The Bonhomme de Tautouville — The Death-Wedding — Honfleur — Bustle there on the arrival and departure of the Steamer — Historical recollections concerning the Town — Present character of the place and its Inhabitants — Traits illustrative of the courage of the Women in recent and ancient Times — Character of the Fishermen — La Côte de Grace — Chapel of Notre Dame — Splendid Views from it — Tradition respecting an ancient Hermitage at the foot of the Hill — Votive Offerings in the Chapel — Mont Joli — St. Clair — Statute Fair.

AN excursion from Havre to Honfleur, and even a short stay in the latter town, will amply repay the inquisitive traveller. The natural scenery, the way of life of the people in and about Honfleur, their customs, their traditions, and likewise their history, are sufficiently interesting. One sailing vessel, *Le Passager*, still plies between Havre and Honfleur; but, since the steamers make the trip regularly every day, she rarely has more than a few passengers, unless bad weather detains the steamers at Havre, and business peremptorily calls travellers to the other bank of the Seine.

Nearly the whole passage from one bank to the other presents the most beautiful and the most

varied prospects. At first it is the shores about Havre that rivet our attention : and, if the proximity of the town impairs their general effect, every moment that we recede from them, they blend more and more into a whole ; till at length Havre, the Côte d'Ingouville, rising amphitheatrically, adorned with a hundred gardens and villas, the steep cliffs of La Hève, and between them the quiet vale of St. Adresse, lastly, the sea and the Seine, concur to form one grand, harmonious, and beautiful picture.

More in the middle of the river, which here becomes a sea, it looks like a vast bay, as, at the termination of the view upwards, the hills on both banks seem to meet ; while on the other side the boundless ocean opens upon you. At length the hills on the left bank of the Seine appear more distinct, and part into the most beautiful and richly-clad eminences, at the foot of which steep jagged rocks form a barrier against the depredations of the sea. On a spring day, when the thousands and tens of thousands of apple and other fruit-trees are wreathed with blossoms, the scene is more beautiful than you often meet with.

But what gives a still greater charm to this trip is the legends and traditions connected with the shores on the right and left, and frequently with the very spots over which the vessel is gliding, and which you may find either in tours in the environs, or have at times opportunities of hearing from the lips of a communicative peasant or seaman.

It is precisely these traditions, this habit of



clothing a simple fact in a romantic dress, and handing it down to posterity in tales, ballads, and proverbs, this method of animating Nature, the hard rock, the blossoming tree, of attaching recollections to it, and ennobling it by the natural poetry of a simple mind, that still bear witness to the German blood which flows in the veins of the Normans.

Do you see yon tree overtopping all the others on the hill above Honfleur? One of its branches is so bent that it seems to turn back almost to the stem, while another, extended, points to the distance, and its foliage has some resemblance to a large head, with a sailor's broad-brimmed hat upon it. This is the Bonhomme de Tatouville.

About a century since, the Seine changed its bed, and for several years the current kept close to the left bank, instead of running as it now does again along the right. This circumstance threw all the pilots and steersmen into no little perplexity, for they were obliged to study the river and its bed afresh, lest they should strike upon its many sandbanks, and precisely there where hitherto they had sailed in the greatest security. An old pilot of Tatouville, who had often risked his own life when there was a chance of saving the lives of others, resolved, when no longer able to direct the helm, not to relinquish his vocation to prevent disaster, and to succour those who are in danger. And so he went every morning before dawn of day to the spot perceptible from a great distance on which that tree stands, and there he stayed till late at night. Watch-



ful and unwearied, he called out to every skipper that passed, telling him how he ought to steer, and what dangerous spots he ought to avoid, and was thus a benefactor to thousands, till death at length summoned him from the humane duty which he had imposed upon himself.

For a service so entirely disinterested, our times would, probably, have bestowed a bit of red riband and a cross, and, perhaps, a paragraph in a newspaper, commendatory of the giver and the receiver ; it may be too not so much as that, unless chance had conveyed the name of the man to the drawing-room of some minister. The grateful Normans chose a memorial of the bonhomme de Tatouville, as the sailors call the old pilot, and a living one, which every year bears green leaves, and bright blossoms, and fair fruit. And then the people without ceremony made a saint of the good man of Tatouville, and conferred on him the gift of performing miracles, because in his life-time he had rendered kind offices to his fellow-creatures. They relate concerning this tree, that, when the bonhomme de Tatouville felt that the day was approaching on which Death would call him from his post, he prayed to God to send him a successor, upon which the staff that supported the hoary seaman struck root in the ground, grew up, assumed the shape of the bonhomme, and has from that time pointed the way to vessels in his stead. The tree was called after him le bonhomme de Tatouville, and it is venerated by the people like the shrine of a saint, and the com-

munes of the whole country round contribute their quota for its protection and preservation, because, as we have observed, it is still the blooming and fruit-bearing guide and director of the navigator.

Opposite to Honfleur, not far from Havre, there was before the Revolution a chapel called Notre Dame des Neiges. Of this chapel, too, a miraculous story is related. In former times Honfleur was once besieged by the English. Under cover of night, some bold fishermen left the town in their boat to carry the tidings to the commander of the French army at Rouen. No sooner were they out of the harbour than such a heavy fall of snow came on, that they could not keep the right track, and at last found themselves, to their extreme mortification and terror, at Havre, where they were in imminent danger of falling into the hands of their enemies, and being hanged as spies. A prayer to Notre Dame caused the snow to cease, and ever afterwards this chapel was called Notre Dame des Neiges. Time has not spared the chapel, as it has the good man. The Revolution laid its iron hand upon it, and has left not a vestige of its existence.

The very bed of the river over which the vessel is rapidly borne has its histories. One of these was related to me by our helmsman.

"When I was a boy"—he might be about forty—"I once saw such a wedding as is very seldom held. A journeyman watchmaker, an excellent fellow, married his master's daughter, and they were such a pair that it did people's hearts good to look

at them. The old watchmaker was rich, and gave a handsome treat to the wedding party. Next day, the nearest friends of the bride and bridegroom helped to clear away the remains of the feast, and after dinner they went together in a boat to a sand-bank full half a league long, which is left dry every day at ebb-tide. You will see it by and by higher up the Seine.

“The merry party drew the boat upon the sand, and all of them were soon dancing cheerily around the fiddler they had brought with them. The water began to rise, but they were too busy with their sport to observe that the circle upon which they were dancing was getting smaller and smaller. When the fiddler gave up playing, and they looked about for the boat, it was far from the sand-bank, and the current was drifting it away at a great rate. This put an end to their sport, and a cruel end it was. Not one of them could swim to overtake the boat; besides, it might by this time be too far off. We afterwards saw it a league from the sand-bank. This grew smaller from minute to minute. The sounds of mirth were turned into shrieks of despair and cries for help; but these cries were drowned by the dashing of the waves, and it was not till the sand-bank was almost entirely covered by the water that the distress of the party upon it was perceived from the shore. Twenty or thirty boats put off immediately. I leaped into my father's, and we all rowed as if for our lives. But the water kept rising, and at last the whole party, thirteen men and



women, had only just ground enough to stand on. And then we saw them fall upon their knees, and lift their hands towards heaven; and we pulled away harder than ever. But the water got higher and rougher, as if angry that it was kept so long from seizing its prey. We saw it enclosing them by degrees, and heard at times through the roaring of the waves a cry for help that cut us to the heart. Hard as we worked, we made way but slowly, for the wind too was against us; and we were yet a good bit from them, and we were the foremost, too, when a wave came rolling and broke over them, and carried them away. All we saw afterwards was the clothes of the women two or three times on the surface of the water, and then these also disappeared. Their last shriek of agony rang from boat to boat, and it was some little time before we were calm enough to say a *Paternoster* for their souls. Till my dying day I shall not forget it.

"There were *thirteen* of them, and they were married on a *Friday*. The old watchmaker was a freethinker, and would have it so, or we should certainly have saved them," added the steersman, and thought that he had said something as profound as a German professor, who assures his auditors that he has found the key to the mystery of the creation of the universe. I took little notice at the moment of this conclusion, and scarcely remarked that the Norman is just as superstitious as the peasantry of northern Europe; for he further said: "Next day we found the bride and bridegroom locked in each



other's arms on the beach, and the day after that the whole town went to the *death-wedding*, as we called the funeral." This conclusion, as well as the whole melancholy scene, took such strong hold of my imagination, that I could not shake off its effect, till the bustle on the quay of Honfleur roused me from my reveries.

The traveller who arrives in the steamer in the harbour of Honfleur, and observes the busy and animated scene on the two quays, will, certainly, at the first moment, form a wrong estimate of the character of the town. The whole *beau monde* of Honfleur, all the loungers, many who have business with persons arriving there, the waiters at the hotels and inns, who thrust their cards into the hands of passengers, the conductors of the coaches for Caen, Rouen, and the environs, who with loud voice proclaim the time of their departure, and how many places they have still to dispose of, are here mingled one among another, so that it is not without difficulty, and perhaps a few punches in the ribs, that you can make your way through them. But all this bustle subsides in the next ten minutes, and is not renewed till the departure of the steamer. With the exception of these two moments, which form an epoch in the monotonous life of the inhabitants of Honfleur, the town is dull and dead ; the streets are empty, and you meet nobody, unless here and there an individual who has perhaps left his business for a moment to call upon a neighbour.

Honfleur, the origin of which is buried in the

night of antiquity, was, before the building of Havre, a place of considerable commercial importance : but, since the foundation of that town, the number of its inhabitants has dwindled from seventeen thousand to eight thousand. The name of Honfleur the town owes to the Saxons or Franks, and it may give some weight to the popular notion that it was built by pirates. Indeed this alone is sufficient to attest the ancient presence of Germans in this country. In the manners and customs of this antique town, one meets with other indications of that circumstance.

The position of Honfleur, especially before Havre was built, must have drawn to it the attention of those who wished to be masters of the river. Hence it was frequently besieged by the English, several times taken, but the assailants were oftener repulsed. In the wars between the Catholics and the Protestants, it was sometimes in possession of the one, sometimes of the other party ; and, hostile to innovations, when occupied by the Leaguers, it signalized itself by a desperate resistance to Henry IV., who did at last reduce it, but not without immense exertions. Noted in ancient times for their commerce, the inhabitants of Honfleur were likewise the best and most daring seamen, and this character they still maintain. Benoit Paulmier, of Honfleur, was one of the first who sailed round the Cape of Good Hope after Vasco di Gama ; Lelièvre, another townsman, first formed commercial connexions for France with Java and Sumatra ; rear-admiral Ha-

melin, who in the last war with Spain commanded the French fleet before Cadiz, rear-admiral Motard, and Captain Morel Beaulieu, show that down to the present day the natives of Honfleur have not disgraced their forefathers. The great majority of the people of Honfleur are now fishermen. The trade of the town is limited to the importation of Norway timber and English coal, and to the exportation of poultry, eggs, and fruit, to England. This trade with England is still of very considerable importance, and amounts annually to 2,500,000 kilogrammes, half of the total export of these articles in the Channel. There are likewise in Honfleur some manufactories of chemical products, a sugar-refinery, and lastly the wives of the fishermen and labourers employ themselves in lace-making in those hours when they are not obliged to assist their husbands. Honfleur beer too is talked of in Normandy; but it is bad enough, and only a little better than the beverage in general to which people here are pleased to give the name of beer.

The character of the town is dull and melancholy. The houses are old, but they derive no venerable appearance from their antiquity, for they are mostly small, painted and whitewashed, roofed with slate, and the walls in part covered with the same material. The people are honest, bold, reckless of danger, persevering, and attached to old institutions. The men are robust, in general not tall, and slender. The women are handsome, and you frequently see among them enchanting figures.



The attachment of the people of Honfleur to old things and old customs, struck travellers two centuries ago, when they saw them in their somewhat antique costume. Evelyn, about the middle of the seventeenth century, says : — “ Honfleur is a poor fishing-town, not remarkable for any thing but the singular though practical dress of the people. They make their clothes here of the skins of bears and other animals, where, as in other places along the coast, they go in wretched rags.” Bear-skins, indeed, are no longer in vogue, but the people of Honfleur are no followers of the modern fashions. They are what they were, bluff, hearty Normans ; the men excellent fathers, the mothers industrious housewives. The very circumstance that the fishermen’s wives here, as in other parts of Normandy, besides the work which they have to do for their husbands in the way of their business, and their domestic concerns, find time for lace-making, is evidence in their favour. But they are more than industrious workwomen, for a trait that is here related of their conduct during the last war between England and France would serve to prove, if such a circumstance really happened, that they are also courageous and devoted wives. The story is this.

The commander of the English naval force off this part of the French coast, having formed the design of penetrating into the mouths of the Seine and Orne, gave orders for capturing all the fishermen of Honfleur, who had previously been suffered to pursue their avocation unmolested, and



keep them as prisoners on board the English ships, as they had one and all refused to pilot them into the river. A few fishing-boats, which were lucky enough to escape, carried these tidings to Honfleur. The wives of the captured men, instead of indulging in useless lamentations, resolved to embark in the vessels which were yet left, to steer for the English fleet, and peremptorily demand the release of their husbands. Accordingly, the flotilla of fishing-smacks, *manned* exclusively by women, sailed out of the harbour, and made direct for the admiral's ship. Having reached her, they sent a deputation to the admiral, charged to insist on the release of their husbands, or at least on sharing their imprisonment, and to declare that, in case of the refusal of both these demands, they would clamber on board without ceremony.

It is easy to conceive what an impression this threat of the sea-amazons of Honfleur must have produced on the commander. After laughing and joking with them for some time, he thought fit to release the men; the women returned with them in triumph, and entered the harbour amidst the acclamations of all Honfleur. If this story be true, I cannot help thinking that it reflects as much honour on the forbearance and humanity of the British admiral as on the patriotic spirit of the fishermen, and the conjugal attachment of their helpmates.

We find a passage in early history strongly illustrative of the martial spirit of the Norman women of those days. Ethelred, king of England, sent a

fleet and an army to Normandy, with orders to lay waste the whole country with fire and sword, to spare nothing but Mont St. Michel, and to bring back to him Richard II., duke of Normandy, alive, and with his hands bound behind him. Three months afterwards, the shattered remains of this army returned to England. "Most potent king," said its commander, "we have not seen Duke Richard, but to our mishap, we had to fight with the savage people of a country, where we found not only very brave men but also women, who rushed into the thickest of the fray, and who smashed the skulls of their stoutest adversaries with the yoke by means of which they carry their water-buckets." It was to the women of Lower Normandy in which Honfleur is situated, that the English commander gave this character.

The Germans and the Gauls may alike lay claim to the bravery of the women of Normandy as being derived from them. Tacitus tells us how the women of the ancient Germans fought, and another ancient writer (Marcellin. lib. xv., c. 11.) says concerning those of the Gauls: "Several foreigners united would not be able to withstand one Gaul assisted by his wife; for these women have formidable weapons in their feet as well as their fists, the blows of which produce the effect of a stone flung at the head." For my part, I am disposed to think that in the intrepidity of the Honfleur women the Gallic principle is more predominant than the German; for cultivation has made the German

women much more patient and gentle than the French.

The English seem never to have been very successful with the French women. We have seen how they were sent home by those of Normandy, and a few centuries later they were driven out of France by two women, the Maid of Orleans and Agnes Sorel. That no grudge is on this account borne towards them, and those of Honfleur in particular, is evident from the number of English families constantly residing there.

Whoever would study the poetry of the mariner's life ought to fix himself for a while in a fishing-village or small coast-town like Honfleur, chiefly inhabited by fishermen and pilots. Among the seafaring people of the larger ports, the sailors of the royal navy act the most conspicuous part; but this class downward is so brutalized that the study of it can excite only profound disgust. The fishermen, on the contrary, owing to causes to which I have already adverted, are in general not only courageous seamen; but a vigorous, hearty race, sound in soul and body. Whoever wishes to make himself acquainted with their character must observe them at home with their families, at market, on board their vessels, and during a storm. At home, industrious and gentle as lambs, but, when excited, bold as lions; at market, honest, clever, and sometimes cunning; on board, strict, stern, silent, and imperious; and lastly, when the storm comes on, hastening towards the shore, yet looking around with scrutinizing eye,



to see whether there is any vessel in danger and in need of succour, or if on shore, flinging themselves into the frail bark, defying the sea and its utmost fury, risking their lives without considering, without hesitating, to save those of others—such are the vicissitudes in the humble career of these people, equally plain, unassuming, and intrepid.

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The moment the traveller steps out of the steamer, he is usually surrounded by beggar-boys, and asked if he would like to be conducted to the Côte de Grace. If he has nothing particular to do, let him take one of these urchins for his guide; but, if he can so contrive it, let him ascend the hill when the sun is about setting. A broad path, bordered on both sides by thick bushes, allowing only here and there a glimpse of the distant prospect, leads to the top of the hill. On arriving there, you first see on the right a missionary cross as high as a house, and on the left, embosomed in trees, the chapel of Notre Dame de Grace.

On emerging from the shady path and reaching the foot of the cross, a view such as you rarely meet with opens upon you. You stand on the margin of a steep and pretty high rock, commanding a prospect of the Seine, the opposite bank, and the boundless sea, dotted with sails as far as the eye can discern. Small barks cross one another, some hastening into port, others flying out, like swallows in a morning for food for their young.



Here and there, between these barks, you perceive the swelling canvass of a three-masted vessel, steadily ploughing the waves—an eagle among the swallows. On the other side, again, steamers, like monsters, vomit fresh clouds of smoke, and dash through the boiling billows. By way of contrast, at the foot of the hill on which we are standing lies a small tract of land interspersed with fragments of rock, surrounded by patches of greensward, with cattle grazing upon them—before us the epic of the sea in its awful beauty, at our feet the idyl of a rural landscape in the profoundest repose.

And then a sunset on this spot! I was here one evening when the firmament was covered with dark clouds. In the west one stripe of azure sky was perceptible, with heavy clouds above and below it. As the sun approached the sea, he tinged the margin of the clouds bordering that open space, and the tints were reflected by the whole expanse of sea between La Côte de Grace and the horizon. At length the sun burst forth in full splendour at that opening. He was reflected in the sea, where he created a fiery torrent of boiling, leaping, gushing gold, the source of which was at our feet, and which was lost in the distance. This torrent of gold was the more beautiful from being sharply defined between the black clouds reflected by the sea on either side of it. Here and there a vessel was sailing in this stream, and threw back a radiance like the halo that we see around the head of a saint or martyr.

On this spot I would fain have built myself a tabernacle, had there not been already a chapel there, to which all the devout people of the country and travelling foreigners make pilgrimages. The people felt like myself that an hermitage was an indispensable accompaniment to such a spot, and therefore preserved the tradition which places the hill in possession of its right. At the foot of the Côte de Grace, on those little meadows between the masses of rock, report places the hermitage of an abbot, named Geremer de Pontalle. The monks had already begun to discover that, in spite of the vows of chastity, poverty, and humility, it was possible to live right jovially in a convent, when this abbot, a very pious man, who prayed and fasted a great deal, strove to persuade his friars that they could not do better than follow his example. The jolly monks were highly offended, and conceived a grudge against the abbot; but, as he had authority to add force to persuasion, they were obliged to dissemble. At length the restraint became too irksome, and they determined to stop the trade of the reformer by a little revolution, and to get rid of him. A miracle—so says tradition—rescued him from the hands of his rebellious brethren. He fled from the convent, retired to the rocks at the foot of La Côte de Grace, and turned hermit. The monks soon discovered his retreat, and sent deputies, who assured him of their repentance, and besought him to return to the convent. So long as he refused, all went on well, and the monks lived as they

pleased. At length, giving credit to their declarations of repentance, the abbot promised them to return on the following day to the convent, but was prevented by a miracle; for on the next day the monks related that in the night, while they were singing the Horæ, the abbot stood bodily before them, and told them that he had just gone up to heaven. They therefore proclaimed him a saint, and built him an altar. A few days afterwards, the fishermen at the foot of the hill found a monk's frock in their nets, and a little further off a body, which would almost lead one to suppose that the pious abbot had pulled off his clothes before he commenced his ascension, and that in his flight he had not met with better luck than Icarus. The people, on the other hand, said that the monks had killed him, which is scarcely conceivable, seeing that he had already been saved by one miracle, and a second would have cost no more trouble than the first. When you find such stories as this current among the people, you are astonished that, in spite of them, the influence of the monks and of the clergy in general could so long maintain its ground; and nothing but the all-prevailing consciousness of our own nothingness can explain this contradiction. Man seldom loses the feeling that he is launched at random into the tempest of life, and therefore grasps at the first plank within his reach, in hopes that it will bring him in safety to the shore.

The chapel of Notre Dame de Grace is just such a chapel as many hundred others: it is the



successor of one more ancient, built by William the Conqueror, because in a storm, before his expedition to England, he had solicited a little miracle from the Virgin Mary, and she had been graciously pleased to grant his prayer. The sea subsequently washed away that part of the rock of the Côte de Grace, on which the Conqueror's chapel stood; and it would almost seem as if Neptune had resolved to revenge himself in this manner on Notre Dame for all the vessels that she had saved from his clutches. Pious inhabitants of Honfleur then built the present chapel, and proved that the victory of the sea over the rock, on which stood the temple where its power was contested, had by no means shaken that rock upon which their faith was founded.

The chapel contains a great number of pictures and other objects attesting the miraculous protection of Notre Dame de Grace. Crutches, silver hands and feet, arms and legs, are every where the order of the day in wonder-working churches, and there is no lack of them here. But, besides these articles, there are great numbers of ships painted on canvass, carved in wood, or engraved on brass, which have all been suspended here by seamen, because the Blessed Virgin had brought them safe into port in spite of storms and weather. In Normandy, you have frequent occasion to remark the religious spirit of the people, which, however, is too apt to beget superstition. Here, on La Côte de Notre Dame de Grace, may be witnessed a scene that certainly occurs no where else but in Italy or



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Spain. Formerly, it was very often the case that, when a vessel had outlived a storm, in which the crew never failed to implore the protection of the mother of God, the whole of them, barefoot and stripped to their shirts, performed a pilgrimage to the chapel of Notre Dame de Grace, and there returned thanks before they went home. This kind of pilgrimage may still be witnessed occasionally, though, indeed, it has become much more rare.

Whit-Monday is held here as a great festival, on which thousands of visitors from far and near throng to this spot. The little chapel can scarcely be seen for tents; and I can attest that the rusty voices of the choristers, and the bray of the serpents in the morning, are as nothing in comparison with the rejoicings of the people, and the songs of the lads and lasses in the evening; and, as there were no nunneries in the time of the Virgin, I cannot think that she will take this evening service much amiss.

A second path leads from the top of the hill over a spot that is called Mont Joli. This Mont Joli is only a few hundred paces from the chapel, and forms a sort of plateau, from which a zigzag path runs to the foot of the hill. When you have reached the plateau, you have before you a prospect as different from the other as a Swiss landscape is from a sea-view. The hill on which you stand shuts out the sea. Before you lies the current of the Seine for miles and miles, enclosed completely with hills—a lake to all appearance, just like those

of the Alps. At ebb-tide, there are formed in this lake numberless sand-banks, large and small, to which flocks of sea-birds resort, sunning themselves, or seeking their prey, which they are obliged to share with the fishermen, who frequently scare them away. Between these sand-banks, the river divides into a thousand small streams, till, further up, we see one unbroken mirror. The banks, rising in the form of terraces, are clad in the most luxuriant verdure, and at intervals you discern the summer residences of those whom the world agrees to call happy. Lastly, on our left, in a gently rising vale, lies the town, with its harbour, its small church, and its cross, a picture of repose beside the active scene produced by the shipping sailing up and down the Seine.

Whenever I have been at Havre, I have turned pilgrim, and regularly paid tribute to the Côte de Notre Dame de Grace; and I thank Heaven that it has bestowed on me imagination enough to fancy the presence of the beloved object, when I have been at a distance from it.

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He who would study popular life in this part of France, would do well to repair on the 17th of July to the beautiful meadow about the chapel of St. Clair, below Honfleur. Here he may witness a scene worthy of Teniers—a fair for the hiring of farm-servants, what in England is called a statute-fair. All the lads and lasses of the environs, who

are leaving their service, go to St. Clair, in their best attire, to exhibit themselves, and all the landholders who want a man-servant, or the farmers' wives who are in need of a maid, attend to examine the goods, and to bargain for the ensuing year. In these bargains, the character of the Lower Normans is clearly displayed. The peasants of Normandy were for many centuries a conquered and oppressed people; and hence it is that, with all their uprightness in matters of business, they combine no little prudence and frequently a degree of cunning. We often meet with such contradictions in life, and it seems as though Nature had purposely created one quality as a bulwark for the others, and *vice versa*.

This cunning of the Norman peasants is frequently exemplified in the clearest manner in the conduct both of the hirers and of those who offer themselves for hire. Those who are seeking a service come, of course, in their Sunday clothes, the lads in a new smockfrock, whip in hand, and at the end of the lash a nosegay, as a sign that they want a situation; the lasses are prinked and pranked in their best, in the high Cauchois cap, and with the distinctive nosegay on the left breast.

Presently the sexes separate: the men range themselves on one side, the women on the other. All of them, you may be certain, are engrossed by the thought how to secure a service for the ensuing year, and yet they appear to be occupied by any thing but that which they have most at heart.



The most unrestrained fun and frolic prevail in the groupe of the young men. They laugh, they banter one another, they scatter their wit abroad, and scarcely wait for a reply before they are ready with the rejoinder. But they all know that the farmers are close by, and that, to them, this apparently innocent mirth, this sportive wit, must serve as proof, that he who is readiest at repartee must be the cleverest fellow among them. Accordingly, it is often the case that, after a humorous sally has excited the general laughter of servants and inasters, one or other of the latter takes a fancy to him by whom it has been uttered. If these manœuvres have not the desired success, they begin to talk about work; one will tell, as if merely for talking's sake, how he yesterday shoved his loaded cart out of a deep hole in a dirty lane, while another will boast of having thrashed so many sheaves of corn in a day for a wager, and that he is ready to lay the same wager again any day. A third, to show his strength, grasps his tall, stout neighbour from behind, and holds him up, for a while, in the air. I should never have done, were I to attempt to enumerate all the petty and mostly ingenious devices, which are employed by these rustics to show their cleverness and to obtain higher wages for their services.

In the other groupe, that of the females, stratagems of a different kind are resorted to. The principal object with them is, to produce a favourable impression by external appearance; therefore they all look extremely demure. Many of these



lasses have sweethearts in the other groupe, but this secret is only betrayed now and then, by a stolen and, as they imagine, unobserved glance. They, too, talk of work, and what they can do, and all they have done in the past year. Great merriment prevails among them also, but it is not suffered to exceed the bounds of decorum; and, in regard to most of them, it would require a close scrutiny before you could give one a preference to the rest.

Those who come to hire, meanwhile, have all their wits about them, as well as those who come to be hired. They, too, seem at first to have no thought whatever of looking for a servant. They come and go, and mingle among the groupes, talking to one or the other, but not with the person on whom they have cast their eye, contriving, however, to be near enough to hear, and to be heard, by him. Very often, a farmer will go to the next neighbour of such a one, and inquire where he has lived and what wages he asks; he draws the other imperceptibly into the conversation, and incidentally puts the same questions to him. Thus one word begets another, till the parties strike a bargain and shake hands; earnest is given, and the nosegay untied from the whip, or removed, in the case of females, from the left to the right breast.

Towards evening, there are but few left who have not taken down the sign of the nosegay, or transferred it from the left to the right; and these retire at length dejected, and abandon the field to their more fortunate competitors.

The anxieties of the day are succeeded by the pleasures of the evening and the night. A number of tents are pitched in a meadow, to which the publicans of the environs bring supplies from their kitchens and cellars. Here the earnest is generally paid after the bargains are concluded, and this finds its way into the pockets of the publicans. All reserve is thrown aside. The lad again acknowledges his lass ; and, amidst dancing, mirth, and bumpers of cider, to the prosperity of their new employers, they forget alike their old toils and those which await them, in those pleasures and enjoyments which place master and servant upon an equality.

On my return in the evening from this human cattle-market at St. Clair to the steamer, I seated myself by a tradesman's family from Havre, and soon learned that this gentleman had been to St. Clair to look for a maid-servant. He seemed to be not quite satisfied, and complained bitterly that it was becoming more and more difficult to find a good servant of either sex. I know not whether this is the case in other parts, but, in regard to Havre, I can easily account for the circumstance, since the spirit of independence in France is spreading downward among the people ; and the flourishing state of the country, the division of landed property, and the certainty of finding employment and subsistence, produce a disinclination to voluntary servitude. My neighbour was extremely sore upon this subject, and prophesied that in fifty years we should

be obliged to clean our own boots. What will be the end of this ! With what giant strides is the world hastening to destruction !

I paid no attention to the rest, for I had something better to do. The sun had set before the vessel quitted the little harbour, and, before we reached the middle of the stream, night enveloped all around us. We heard the rolling of distant thunder, and now and then a flash of lightning, darting in zigzags athwart the sky, afforded for a second a spectral glance of remote objects. Then all became dark again. Silence prevailed on board, for the approaching storm had closed the lips of almost all the passengers. The vessel steadily pursued her course, flinging back the luminous waves on either side, and leaving a long bright stripe in her wake. This scene is not to be described ; I doubt even whether it can be painted.

At length we were off Havre. The town, with its illuminated streets and the thousand lights of the Côte d'Ingouville, seemed to hurry past us ; while the gas-lamps, sometimes in a straight line, sometimes one above another, and sometimes huddled together, formed a thousand curious figures. On entering the port, a long peal of thunder proclaimed our arrival and bade us welcome.



## CHAPTER XIII.

A Journey by Diligence—The Imperiale, and fellow-travellers — Fecamp—Breakfast Adventure— Village of Cany — Dieppe— Appearance of the Town—View from the Pier — The Baths— The Ball-Room — Deserted Shops — Fisheries — Ancient Importance of Dieppe— Its present Insignificance — State of Parties—Newspapers—Unsociable Character of the Inhabitants.

“MAN proposes, God disposes,” is an old adage, but it is one to which, notwithstanding its antiquity and general acceptance, I, for one, am not disposed to subscribe. God favours and prospers those energetic men, who say : “To will is to do.” Nay, he who has once proceeded so far as to will may boldly lift up his voice and command, for the mass will obey and repeat in all humility : — “Man proposes, God disposes.”

Just at this moment, indeed, I have no particular right to set up for the panegyrist of those who *will* : for six weeks ago I meant to take a trip to Dieppe, and arrived here but yesterday ; I meant to go by steamer from Havre to Dieppe, and was obliged to travel by diligence ; I meant, like the great folks, to bathe at Dieppe, to give myself an air of importance, and could not come hither till the rough



weather had blown away all the fashionable invalids.

I took my place in the second story of the diligence, called in France *imperiale*, or imperial seat, on which account I chose it. There is some little danger in climbing up to this imperial throne, but, when once up above, it does your heart good to look down upon the petty creatures beneath. As in life, so here, it is the aristocracy who can afford to pay for the *coupé*, that sit just beneath the emperor, and over whose heads he can play what pranks he pleases. The middling class in the *interieur* look quietly on, happen what will. Lastly, it is further characteristic for France that the *imperiale* is in general occupied by the *canaille*, by persons of the lower class, so that the sovereignty of the people is virtually proclaimed every day upon all the high roads.

We were this time an imperial triumvirate, two Englishmen besides myself. I do not include the conductor's dog, which lay behind us over the *interieur*. Chance, accident, are droll fellows; and, when they placed the dog behind the imperial triumvirate, as a kind of *vielle garde*, *garde du corps*, or municipal guard, above the middle class, assuredly they never gave it a thought that the brute was in his proper place there. For my part, all sorts of thoughts passed through my head. The dog had a stump-tail, and I recollected having read somewhere that, at some place or other, the practice of cutting off dogs' tails prevailed so long, that at

last they came into the world without that appendage; and it occurred to me that men have at times been treated like dogs, till at last they have wished to be treated no otherwise. Man proposes, God disposes.

It was scarcely an hour after we started, when my two co-emperors prepared to break their fast. Their seat only was imperial; the breakfast, like that of the meanest labourer or beggar, consisted of a bit of dry bread. Humble as it was, the dog longed for a share of it, crept to us, and howled dismally. This was music to their repast; but, when the performer had the audacity to solicit from the high folks, as he would have done from honest citizens, a recompence for his pains, he was rewarded with a kick and an energetic execration. The poor beast could not forget the disappointment, and continued howling with short intermissions till we reached Fecamp, in spite of our threats and even blows. I wished most sincerely that the breakfast had choked him.

The morning was cool, and the country beautiful. It was a treat to overlook it from our lofty seat, and I was frequently sorry that the vehicle rolled so rapidly from particular scenes. Shortly before we reached Fecamp, the country became more dreary, and naked rocks and downs covered with heath proclaimed the proximity of the sea.

At Fecamp we descended for half an hour from our imperial seat, my two colleagues to take their second, and I my first, breakfast. This was neither

better nor worse than the meals usually prepared for travellers, who must be content with what they can get. We had, moreover, time enough for desert before we were summoned by the conductor. One of my companions was the first to ask the landlady how much he had to pay, and she replied with the interrogation "*Sans vin ?*" The Englishman turned pale; and it was a few seconds before he recovered his utterance to discharge a volley of energetic English curses; but, recollecting that he was in France, he added: *C'est abominable ! c'est un guet-apens !* and other expressions highly complimentary to the hostess. She, poor woman, stood as if thunderstruck. *Mais, monsieur,* she exclaimed, *que voulez-vous ? C'est horrible !* rejoined my fellow-traveller. *Je ne payerai pas cela ! Cent vingt sous pour un méc hant déjeuner ! c'est abominable !* The matter was now cleared up; we laughed heartily, and my fellow-traveller was good-humoured enough to join us, when we explained to him that the question simply was *Sans vin ?* and had nothing to do with *cent vingt sous*. He paid his two francs without grumbling, and that was quite enough.

These were nearly all my travelling adventures, for even the conductor's dog thenceforward kept silence. He, too, had filled his belly, and ceased his inconvenient opposition. Now and then the uniformity of the road was broken by a hill, which our conductor always begged us to walk up. Beyond Cany, a manufacturing village, the country afforded a rich treat to us, or rather to me, for my two com-



panions informed me that they had missed the steamer at Havre, and were very anxious to catch another at Dieppe, for which reason, I suppose, they ran up hill as if they had not a moment to lose. About midway I was quite out of breath. I let my companions hurry on, and looked back after the diligence. One of the finest prospects imaginable met my view. In a valley on the right lay the village embowered in foliage, which only here and there afforded a glimpse of a roof, and of the modest church at the extremity of the place. From the village ran, for four or five miles on the left, a beautiful luxuriant vale of meadow-land, intersected by alleys, and enlivened by a streamlet, and at the further end of it was a handsome chateau. Beside the high road there was a second valley, which united with the other, and beyond both rose the undulating lines of several hills, clothed with thick woods.

I was sorry when the diligence overtook me, and I was obliged to mount again. About four in the afternoon we reached Dieppe. The everlasting *garçons d'hôtel*, who never fail in any town in France to take travellers on their arrival by storm, came to pay us their compliments. I was in not a little embarrassment, for I had not forgotten by way of precaution to note down the address of a tolerable inn in my pocket-book, and then left my pocket-book behind, because I had got a new one. Thus, amidst the storm raised by the *garçons*, I was without helm or anchor. Three addressed me in English, one in



Russian—I believe, at least, that it was Russian—but I continued mute as a fish, and, therefore, they decided *C'est un français*. I know not precisely why my silence should gain me this title of honour, but it rendered me good service, for they all quitted me, and fell upon the other travellers. Thus I could listen undisturbed, while the representatives of the different inns sounded forth their praises, and at last chose the Hotel des Etrangers, where I heard it said one might dine *à la carte*, and have a decent room at a moderate price. This hotel I can recommend. After changing my clothes I made a tour of the town before dinner or supper, whichever you chuse to call it. Dieppe was cannonaded in 1694 by an English fleet, and almost totally destroyed. Owing to this circumstance the place is better built than the majority of the old Norman towns. The streets are tolerably straight and regular, and the houses mostly of brick. But, in spite of its youth, Dieppe has a very grave, almost antiquated, look; the dark or ash-grey colour predominates. The houses in general are not lofty, having rarely more than two or three floors, which proves that the town is not over-populated. The streets show but little animation, and it is only about the harbour, when the fishing-smacks are going out or coming in, that rather more bustle is found. Only a couple of merchantmen were lying here, and but very few fishing-boats in proportion to the space.

Proceeding along the quays, you arrive at the

pier, from which an imposing spectacle presents itself. On the right and left extend lofty chalk cliffs, whose foot runs out into the sea. The pier is situated in the centre of a spacious semicircle formed by the steep shore. I was favoured by Fortune, which here presented me with a sunset, exquisite as a heart that always throbs higher at such scenes could desire. The ebb-tide had left bare the beach at the entrance of the harbour, and across it ran a multitude of streamlets, reflecting the glow of sunset in their course to the sea. A fishing-smack had run aground on one of those little hills of shingle, by which the contrasts formed by the sea, the town, the rocks, the beach, were rendered still more lively. Out at sea fishing-boats were moving to and fro, and frequently crossing the streak of gold which the sun threw from the west over the waves. The distant sky was overcast with dense heavy clouds, tinted by the sun, and lastly the rocks to westward reflected his rays upon sea and town. Nature alone speaks a universal language.

Till the sun had sunk beneath the sea, this sight chained me to the pier. I then walked along the shore to the baths. I met but few pedestrians, and in the buildings of the bathing establishment profound silence prevailed. I had hoped to find at least part of the company still at Dieppe, and was mortified to see the profound desolation which reigned here. A posting-bill, which informed me that there would be a ball that evening, gave me fresh hopes. The fair visitors are at their toilet, thought I.

This hope accompanied me back to my hotel, whither I returned to dinner. The ball was to begin at eight o'clock, and I resolved to shew my consequence by not going till nine. The time seemed very long till then ; and, if I had not deemed a new pair of gloves indispensable, and stopped to chat a quarter of an hour with the female who served me with them, I verily believe that I should have been at the place by half-past eight.

At length I entered the ball-room. It was handsomely fitted up and brilliantly lighted. There was a complete orchestra, and a company consisting of three ladies and seven gentlemen, who looked in amazement at one another. A very lively conversation was going forward between one of the ladies and two gentlemen ; the others were scattered upon three benches rising one above another, and kept their eyes fixed upon the door, which opened only when the uneasy host entered or went out. I was the last arrival ; and in about a quarter of an hour the landlord again entered, and told us that, for want of a sufficient company, the ball could not take place, that our money should be returned, and that he wished us a very good night. In this manner I gained three francs and a pair of new gloves, which I shall save for the next ball I go to in Paris.

The frequenters of bathing places are the birds of passage of society at the present day. The first cold north-east wind generally drives them back to their homes. But I had hoped that not all of them



at least would have flown away. I had miscalculated. Subsequently I was several times at the baths. All was deserted and desolate, excepting that in the reading room I found a few invalid officers and a lady, formerly one of the attendants of the duchess of Berry, who had settled at Dieppe out of attachment to the princess.

For the rest, Dieppe is reputed to be during the season one of the pleasantest sea-bathing places in Europe. I have no doubt that it is. Bountiful Nature has here provided the grand requisites for enjoyment, and where she left any thing to wish for, the deficiency has been supplied by the proprietors of the baths and the municipality of Dieppe. The bathing-house consists of a long gallery, running out on either side into a spacious hall. That on the right is appropriated to the gentlemen, and contains a library and a reading-room, furnished with the French and English periodicals. The hall on the left belongs to the ladies: a piano-forte and several collections of the most amusing lithographic prints are destined to kill time with decency.

An iron railing encloses a spacious yard, and with pleasure I there beheld all my old acquaintance of the Champs Elysés, caroussels, elastic bomb-projectors, swings, and the like: and my imagination had full licence to fancy the most enchanting female forms engaged in the various sports for which these things are destined. Not a living creature disturbed me in my reveries.

On the left, at the end of the courtyard, is a



restaurant ; but not a chimney emitted smoke, and doors and windows were closed. Outside the railing which encloses the sanctuary, is a circle of shops of all sorts, a miniature Palais royal. Milliners, hair-dressers, jewellers, booksellers, wine-merchants, umbrella-makers, opticians, and thirty more, settle here during the season and exhibit their goods for sale.

All these buildings and galleries are of wood, and at first sight one would suppose that, resembling the scenes of a theatre, they were erected on some festive occasion merely for the day. But they are destined to defy the tempests of the sea, and they do defy them in their weakness. This is their strength, as well as woman's. But the contrast here is striking. Before us the sea, beside us the rocky cliff, and the massive fortified castle of Dieppe, behind us the towers of the town-wall, which even the English bombs could not damage ; and beneath our feet the slight boards, and over our heads a roof equally slight, covering a place devoted exclusively to pleasure. Those resist the sea, which punishes their resistance, undermining the foot of the rocks, and from year to year rending from them fragments and engulphing them in its abyss—these smile blandly upon it and disarm its rage, and it passes them by, merely flinging over them in sport its veil of foam, and making them glisten the more brilliantly in the sun when this foam is dissolved into pearls. It seems as though the god of ocean gave this command to his billows : — “ Touch not

this place, for here an invalid was cured, there one in health enjoyed himself, and the whole has been erected merely by way of thank-offering unto me !”

I came too late to witness the sports that are held here, and could only describe them from hearsay. Whoever is interested about them may procure a description of them as well as I: but so much I may add, that they are merry enough.

It is only during the last twenty years that Dieppe is become a fashionable bathing-place. The duchess of Berry, who visited the town every year, first brought it into notice. The revolution of 1830 operated injuriously upon it. A trip to Dieppe, however, had become indispensable to the Parisians; and, if formerly it was frequented by people of fashion because the duchess went thither, they are now so accustomed to the way that they need no bell-wether to lead them. Dieppe gains annually many thousands by its bathing-establishments; indeed, it is owing almost entirely to them that the town is gradually recovering itself.

Dieppe is a sort of parasitic plant. It lives at the expence of others, at the expence of the guests visiting or passing by it. No sooner have the bathers taken wing, than the herring supplies their place. In the middle of October, this fish traverses the waters of the Channel from Boulogne to Havre. One hundred and twenty or thirty smacks are engaged in this fishery. The herrings caught in the October season are sent off fresh, and mostly consumed in Paris and the provinces.

In the middle of August also, from sixty to eighty vessels of 25 to 30 tons each, and with a crew of about fifteen men, sail from Dieppe on the herring fishery. At this period the herring frequents the northern coasts of Britain, and the fishermen salt it on board. These herrings are universally preferred.

In the month of July it is at the expence of another guest that the people of Dieppe live. About this time the mackarel arrives in the waters of Picardy, whither the fishermen of Dieppe go in quest of it.

But the fishermen of this town are not content with the booty which takes the trouble to meet them, as it were, half way. In the months of February and March, a great number of vessels leave Dieppe for the waters of Newfoundland, to catch cod, which they bring home partly salted and partly dried.

The fishery is the principal, or, more properly speaking, the only important pursuit of the people of Dieppe. Setting aside the trade arising from that, the commerce of Dieppe is not worth mentioning. One branch of industry only flourishes here, that is the working in ivory. Every fourth or fifth house in Dieppe is a shop for these toys, or, if you prefer the term, curiosities. It must be confessed that they often display great skill and patience. But, though they may occasionally be valuable as works of art, it cannot be denied that the artist has thrown away his labour upon an ungrateful field. The pious purchase a Christ or a Madonna in bone, heretics a Voltaire or Jean Jaques, old soldiers a



Napoleon, and the bathers all sorts of trifles. Some hundreds of industrious workmen gain a decent subsistence by these performances; so let us not grudge those who are fond of them these play-things.

Dieppe was formerly one of the chief seaports of France. I could relate its history, from which whoever chose might learn a good deal. But time and space permit only a few observations. The mercantile class here was anciently wealthy enough to equip whole fleets of ships of war, to procure for itself reparation of injuries done by states and princes, and to display its power when a king of France needed the assistance of a brave naval force.

The history of Dieppe is that of the Italian republics, of the German free Hanse towns. Dieppe became wealthy, powerful, and respected in the same way that these did; and it sank into its present state owing to the same cause by which these declined. Liberty was the tree from which they plucked their golden fruit. As I have already observed, *that* government is the best which governs the least. The ancient towns were independent; they did their business themselves, and therefore did it well. The taxes raised from the town remained in the town, and the townsmen themselves decided in what way they might be applied most advantageously for the general welfare. For them there was no government to take them under its protection, and therefore they protected themselves; they were not compelled to ask a higher power whether



they might do this or that for the benefit of the whole ; and thus whatever was necessary to be done was done at the moment when it was wanted. The guardian is always a worse manager than the real owner, than the father, who studies only the advantage of his children, and has no desire to live at their expence. In France, the government now protects all towns in one and the same manner, so that they certainly cannot be ruined by any inconsiderate step, nor yet by any that has been well considered, but by the inactivity in which they are kept. They are logically prevented from falling, inasmuch as they are forbidden to stir.

In the history of Dieppe this is most clearly exemplified. So long as this town was independent, it advanced with giant strides. Without the aid of any other rulers than its own magistrates, it could build churches and castles, fortify the town, excavate docks, and throw bridges across them. Its merchantmen traversed the seas, and discovered distant lands, and planted colonies in them. Traders of Dieppe were the first Europeans who sailed to the eastern coasts of Africa and settled there ; they were the first who doubled the Cape of Good Hope. Auber and Verazar, two Dieppe seamen, discovered Canada, and the brothers Parmentier the islands of Fernambuck. Dieppe seamen, led by Guerrard and Roussel, established themselves even before the Spaniards at Maragnon in South America, and Ribaud was the first European who settled in Florida. A single seaman of Dieppe, Pierre, became

the terror of all nations, and a single Dieppe merchant, Ango, could declare war against the king of Portugal, and force him to send ambassadors to sue for peace.

And what is now this once opulent and powerful commercial town? and how has it become what it is at this day? Has the sea, the source of its former wealth, retreated from it? Are the men of Dieppe incapable of building ships? Have its seamen degenerated? No, all these things are much the same as they were four or five hundred years ago. One thing only is changed. The free town, which acted independently, was drawn into the vortex of the all-absorbing dominion of a Francis I, of a Louis XIV., and from that moment lost its wealth, its power, its importance.

Dieppe, the once opulent seaport town, is now a sea-village. The houses of this sea-village, the ships, are small huts of one floor, and very rarely does a two or a three-decker enter its harbour. The seamen are as hardy and as brave as when a Duquesne arose from their midst; but they are no longer the enterprising merchants, whose vessels frequented the remotest harbours, and created them where there were none. They are now but petty cultivators of the sea, who reap where Heaven throws a harvest in their way, but very seldom pass the limits of their own parish to visit a distant market. And how should it be otherwise? For these twenty years the harbour of Dieppe has needed an improvement that would cost six or eight

millions; and for these twenty years, during which period Dieppe pays perhaps five times the amount in taxes that it used to do, the town has been in vain soliciting the government to undertake this work. And who can doubt that, if the town had as formerly these millions to expend itself, the wants of the place would long ago have been supplied.

The people of Dieppe feel more keenly than they are themselves aware how deeply their town has declined. They seek the cause in the political changes, and are therefore violent politicians. Some of them have a faint notion that the once flourishing state of their town was a fruit of liberty, and these call themselves republicans; others had now and then the good fortune to be invited by the duchess de Berry, or her master of the ceremonies, and to breathe the air of the same room with her highness, and these are most devoted adherents of legitimacy; while a third party, having shorn their sheep at the July revolution, are now thinking of securing their gains, and are therefore *juste-milicus*. Almost all the inhabitants of Dieppe, excepting the fishermen, who belong to no party, are more or less attached to one of these three. The republicans are the most numerous, and consist chiefly of persons of the middle class; the partisans of the government are the more opulent traders, and those of the restoration many old civilians, a few old wealthy Dieppe families, and some nobles. The majority of the national guard are republican, as



the choice of their officers and of the commandant, M. Feret, keeper of the library and editor of the *Memorial Dieppois*, sufficiently proves. The electors of the deputies, on the other hand, are mostly partisans of the present government, whence arises a discord between the deputation and the people, which, if not resolved into harmony, will some time or other oblige the directors of the political concert to re-tune the other instruments, since it is, after all, the national guard that gives the key-note.

Political discussions are carried on in Dieppe with more violence than is generally the case in the provinces. All three parties have their paper—the legitimists, *Le Phare*; the juste milieu, *La Vigie*; the republicans, *Le Memorial Dieppois*. The first is written in general in a decorous and temperate tone; but the second is always in a state of high excitement. It espouses a cause that is desperate in Dieppe, and finds in the *Memorial* an opponent, for whom it is not a match, either in talent or erudition. Hence its attacks mostly become personal in the end, and lead to challenges and to the leaden arguments of pistol-bullets.

The state of things at Dieppe is certainly one cause why political discussions are carried on there with such warmth. For two-thirds of the year the town is almost without occupation, and its inhabitants then have plenty of time to turn their attention to politics. Such is the state of social relations in Dieppe, that it furnishes no means of moderatin



the angry passions. There is not a single family in the town that admits visitors, or throws open its drawing-room. Each lives in his house as though the deserts of Africa commenced at his door. Here are no literary associations, no clubs, no frequented coffee-houses, no reading-rooms, nothing in short that gives sociability to society, and that accustoms men to toleration. In other places too I have found parties, but these met occasionally and conversed together, and treated each other with civility at least, if not cordiality: they were foes who shook hands at the advanced posts, and chatted together familiarly till the trumpet summoned them to the fight. Not so in Dieppe. The people of that town are very honest, clever, industrious, nay, even temperate and moral people; but, in a social point of view, they are real badgers who live in winter upon their fat, without ever quitting their holes. For them beautiful Nature herself seems to have no charms; for, on the noble promenades, on the pier, which affords so striking a prospect, I now and then met with a stranger only, but scarcely ever with a person belonging to the town. Heaven forgive them this sin!—I cannot.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Fishing village of Le Pollet—Its Appearance—Its Inhabitants—Their Character—Their Superstition—Their independent Spirit—Marvellous Adventures—Traditions of the Sailors and Fishermen—Pilgrimages of Seamen—Popular Prejudices—History of the Boussards—Conjectures from the Legends of the Polletais that they are of German origin.

OPPOSITE to Dieppe, and separated from it by the harbour only, is situated the fishing village, Le Pollet. This village forms, in fact, part of the town; but, no sooner have you crossed the little bridge of boats, which leads from the town to it, and entered one of the streets, than you may fancy yourself many miles off in another country. Houses, dress, language, race of people, are all different, strange, and new.

The fishermen and fish-sellers of Dieppe inhabit this appendage to the town. Narrow streets, houses built of wood and clay, of a dingy ash-gray or mud colour, may indeed be seen elsewhere; but rarely have they so foreign an air as here. The narrow street is rendered still narrower by a hundred wooden or iron arms, protruded from every window and casement, and upon which fish, nets, and the clothes of the fisher men and women are

hung out to dry. Here you see a gray jacket, there a red petticoat, and close to it a dozen glistening mackarel over a brown net, in which they have just been caught. In every room in these diminutive houses dwells a family—father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, and a whole tribe of grandchildren—for the marriages of the sturdy seafaring people are very prolific. From the street you step at once into the dwelling-room, bed-room, store-room, kitchen, and cellar, all in one. I took a stolen peep at some of them, and observed the beds placed one above another, as in the cabin of a ship, and counted ten, twelve, or more, in a single room. These might indeed be destined for the accommodation of the fishermen, who come during the fishing season from the whole surrounding country to Dieppe; though it is possible enough that they might belong to a single family; for, as I have observed, the marriages of these people are prolific.

Before the doors stand or sit the women of the whole house, six, ten, twelve, in number, mending the old nets, making new ones, or washing and patching the men's clothes. Around them is the whole crew of children, some of them employed, but mostly engaged in the sports of their age. A seaman now and then steps up to them and pays them some coarse compliment, which makes them all laugh; and here and there some veteran, whose weather-beaten face tells that he has defied a hundred storms, stops to chat for a few minutes.

Were I a painter, I would try to represent these scenes:—or perhaps not, for, after all, the life that



reigns here is every thing and not to be painted. And then the smell which impregnates the atmosphere, and without which it is impossible to figure Le Pollet to one's self—how paint that, how express that ethereal, sour, salty sauce to the whole, redolent of tar and train-oil! And it is the sauce that, as in all other instances, gives the thing a flavour. Who can paint, who describe that?

The people too are totally different here. The men are short and stout; the women slender, but robust. A healthy complexion, an animated eye, embellish a face that is in general regular and oval. The features of the men mostly indicate only that bold resolute spirit peculiar to seamen; while those of the women betray not less boldness, but also a certain degree of irony and humour. The women are if any thing more remarkable than the men. The latter resemble seafaring people in general, but the women of Le Pollet are a distinct genus. They are perhaps more men than their husbands. During the absence of the latter, the whole management of the house is in their hands, and they seldom resign it when the men return. It is they who sell the fish that are caught, and thus come in contact with the people of Dieppe, who are further advanced in civilization; hence they soon attain a higher step than their husbands, and so have a right to wield the sceptre. It is they who drag the fishing-boats into and out of harbour; and they share with their husbands many other laborious occupations, which serve to fortify their bodies.



Their masculine habits give them a relish for the pleasures of the men : they never miss their treats and their parties, and sing their song and take their glass with as much glee as their companions of the ruder sex. This somewhat barbarous custom, however, is attended with these good effects, that man and wife more rarely quarrel, that the latter cannot reproach the former with spending all he gets in drink, and that they return home together, and at a very early hour. Let him who wishes to keep a whole skin beware of picking a quarrel with these he-women ; for there is no joking with them : but to the Parisian dames who sigh for the emancipation of the sex, I can give no better advice than to marry a Polletais.

Before the last twenty years, the inhabitants of Le Pollet were more remarkable for their costume than they are at present. It now consists in general of the usual fishing dress of Normandy—a long brown or dark blue jacket and trousers, boots covering the thighs as well as legs, or wide canvass upper trousers, and lastly a lacquered sailor hat or a red Phrygian cap. Twenty years ago their costume consisted of a light blue jacket, with white cuffs and collar, trunk hose, high stockings, and shoes with buckles. Civilization is making progress here, and has exterminated many of the peculiarities of the Polletais, and among others their hereditary enmity against the people of Dieppe : but the character of this race is still original enough.

The Polletais is, like most seamen, brave and kind-hearted. The widows and orphans are sup-

ported by them : they send out their nets with the smacks, and what is caught in them is as punctually delivered to the owners as if a husband or father still shared the toil and the danger with his old comrades. No pauper ever applies in vain to a Polletais, when he returns to port laden with his booty.

The grander the nature around us, the more insignificant we appear to ourselves. When the sea rages and dashes against the rocks, when the oak forest roars and the wind uproots trees a thousand years old, then, filled with awe, we pray or we adore. Hence it is that seamen are more pious than we who live upon land, and to whom Nature appears in all her omnipotence much more rarely than to them. The inhabitants of Le Pollet are not less pious than seafaring men in general. I was once in the miners' church at Goslar, and the solemn silence, the subdued tones of their voices, ascending as from the bowels of the earth to heaven, moved me to the bottom of my soul. In the church at Pollet I was affected in a very different manner. Here too, while the priest alone was praying, solemn silence prevailed, but when the fishermen and sailors began to sing, I felt quite uncomfortable. It was as though they were exorcising a tempest, and apprehensive lest the Almighty would not hear them unless they drowned with their singing the voice of the storm. I fancied that I heard, amid the roaring of the waves, now a cry for help, and presently a shriek of agony. But when I looked

around me and saw the sun shining brightly in at the windows, and was thus brought back from the reveries of imagination to the realities of life, my ears were so painfully affected, that I was glad to leave the church as speedily as possible.

A few days afterwards I accidentally witnessed a funeral procession of both sexes, following in silent devotion one whose life had been wrecked to his last home. Even the nearest relatives behind the corpse expressed their grief only in that solemn composure which is natural to persons who have a thousand times looked death in the face without quailing.

From piety to superstition is in general but a step; the limit is a mathematical line. But there are various kinds of superstition. With the one, children are driven to bed, and old women made to hold their tongues. The other is the poetry of common sense, which strives to solve the riddles of Nature. Of this kind was the superstition of the ancients, of the Greeks, of the Romans, and above all of the Germans; of the former kind is the superstition of modern times, the dregs of ecclesiastical christianity. The superstition of seamen is mostly genuine pagan, full of manly energy. The Nature in which they live is too great for their comprehension and their eye: they gaze in astonishment at her wonders, and endeavour to copy them in their poetry of superstition. But, pious and superstitious as the inhabitants of Le Pollet may be, they never repeat the Lord's Prayer unless in case of emergency, and are a set of resolute fellows, who are not afraid to



rap out an oath even in the confessional, and to promise the priest, with a *Damne! mon père!* to give up cursing and swearing. An anecdote which is related of a Polletais characterises all his fellow-townsmen, whether the circumstance actually occurred or not.

A fisherman of Pollet, after an illness, went to church to pray his Ave Maria, and to return thanks to Heaven for his recovery. A very large crucifix was hung up in the church. The chain with which it was fastened gave way, and the wooden image of the Redeemer broke the fisherman's arm, so that he was again brought to death's door. The priest came to him to prepare him for the journey to the other world, and, at the end of the ceremonies, held a crucifix to him to kiss. The patient at first refused; but, at the persuasion of the priest, he at length complied. "Pour toi," said he, turning to the crucifix; "ze veux bien, ze ne l'en veux pas; mais pour ton grand coquin de frère, Dieu me damne si ze le bais jamais!"

Another story is not less characteristic. D'Aubigné, archbishop of Rouen, was dissatisfied with the minister of Pollet, who had been accused of some heresy or other. He therefore forbade all the curates of the parish to read mass at Pollet. The Polletais cared nothing about this, so long as their priest, whom they highly esteemed, could read mass himself. To put an end to the scandal, the archbishop at length came to Dieppe, and held a convocation in the church of St. Remy, to decide upon



the case of the heretical *curé*. The Polletais forced their way into the church, and dispersed the sacred conclave. The archbishop escaped by flight. But this was not enough for them. They resolved to take a more severe revenge for the attack on their beloved pastor, and so they posted themselves at the bridge which the archbishop would have to cross, intending to intercept him and to throw him into the sea. His eminence, however, not disposed to purchase canonisation, like St. Nepomuk, by a cold bath, made a circuit, and hastened out of the town by the opposite gate.

A good Catholic will no doubt make the sign of the cross over the piety of the Polletais. Such are they, however, at once devout, energetic, and independent.

The life of seamen is so full of adventures, which look as much like miracles as a son looks like his father, that it would be surprising if they did not believe in miracles. A sailor related to me one or two such adventures.

One day, the wind dashed one of the fishing smacks of Dieppe against the pier. The furious waves then seized the shattered boat, lifted her up, flung her over the pier, and engulfed her with all on board. Hundreds of spectators witnessed the distress and destruction of the vessel, which was recognised. Mothers and wives hastened to the spot, but the death-struggle was over. One of them, who had been married but a fortnight, and who had lost her husband by this catastrophe,

swooned, and was carried into the nearest house. It was some hours before she was able to return home. And, as she opened the door, lo ! there sat her husband, warming his chilled limbs at the fire ! The friends who accompanied her made the sign of the cross, but the young wife threw her arms about the neck of the supposed spectre, who answered her kisses with flesh and blood. The same wave which threw the vessel over the pier, hurled him from the deck upon it: there he lay for some time senseless, and did not recover himself till the crowd had dispersed. Next day, the old fishwomen declared that Notre Dame had picked him up out of the sea, and laid him down on the pier.

On another occasion, a fishing smack grounded on the beach off Dieppe. The tempestuous sea rocked her from side to side, and every fresh wave threatened to swallow her up. The crew betook themselves to the boat, but no sooner had they pushed off from the smack than they were capsized by the furious element, and all hands perished. Wave after wave broke over the stranded vessel, and it was several hours before the sea retired and left her dry. The officers of the customs keep a vigilant eye on such vessels, and prevent any one from going on board them, till they have been inspected by the proper authorities. The fisher-boys, nevertheless, seldom fail to collect about such wrecks; and that was the case on this occasion. They distinctly heard a moaning in the vessel, and scampered off, certain that it must be the devil himself. The

custom-house officers, however, went on board, and found two boys belonging to the vessel, whom the crew had not had time to take with them in the boat, stiff with wet and cold, but otherwise unhurt, in the hold.

Almost every seaman has met with extraordinary adventures of this kind, and hence we may account for his belief in that which he has not experienced, and which, after all, must appear scarcely more wonderful to him than the other. The supernatural, the mystical, here lies so near the truth, that it must be very difficult, at least for the untaught seaman, to discover the boundary between them.

Whenever a vessel returns from Newfoundland, a pilot leaves the harbour in his boat and sails to meet her. When he gets on board, the pilot must not speak to a creature excepting the captain, to whom he then relates every thing of interest as well to the crew in general as to each individual, that has occurred during the last four or five months. It is not till the pilot has left the ship that the captain acquaints his men with the news which he has communicated. He informs one of the death of his father or his bride, another of the birth of a son. What must be the feelings of the whole crew when they see the pilot-boat approaching ! what must be their impatience while the pilot is closeted with the captain in his cabin ! how the heart of each must throb, after the boat has left the ship, when the captain calls him, uncertain whether he shall hear



tidings of joy or grief!—all this may be more easily imagined than described. Such moments elevate the man, expand his heart, and impart that composure, which in the end makes him forget what storm is, but also the force to grasp and to elaborate the highest ideas. This is a school in which one becomes a poet, without wishing to be or knowing that one is so.

The old and interesting traditions of the sailors and fishermen are gradually disappearing, along with their characteristic costume. Civilisation — mischievous civilisation — threatens to revolutionise Pollet itself. It cost me no little trouble, and I was obliged to have recourse to former travellers, to discover any traces of these old traditions.

On All Souls' day, *le jour des morts*, the seaman calls to mind all those who, during the past year, have perished in the conflict with the other element. There are few who have not to mourn a father, a brother, a son, or a friend. What wonder that on this day the imagination should be more lively and more active! Year after year, on All Souls' day—so old folks at Pollet still relate—a sail was discerned about midnight in the distance, and it seemed to be wafted by a stiff breeze towards the port of Dieppe. But presently it was seen hanging loosely about the mast, and the ship, nevertheless, approached nearer and nearer. The people on shore could at length distinguish that she was a vessel which had been missing for some time and given up for lost. She came nearer still, and now the crew



could be discerned. And the mother saw the son whose loss she had bemoaned for months, and the daughter the father, the sister the brother, and the widow her husband. All hastened to the spot to hail their joyful return. The crew, meanwhile, stood silent and motionless. Nobody was surprised at this, for very often, in imminent danger, the sailors make a vow not to speak till they have returned thanks to Notre Dame and to Heaven for their deliverance. A cable was thrown to the ship from the pier, for the purpose of drawing her into the harbour. Men and women laid hold of it, as they may be daily seen to do in Dieppe, to haul the vessel into port ; but, tug as they would, they could not move her from the spot. At length, the church clock struck one, and the ship vanished, with all on board.

Another popular tradition, perhaps more ancient than the preceding, and owing its origin to the times of the Druid or German paganism, is connected with the same idea that called forth the story of All Souls' day. About midnight a carriage was heard rolling through the streets of Pollet, and the relations heard the voices of those who had died in the course of the past year. White dogs ran before the vehicle, which was drawn by a team of eight white horses, and in it stood or sat the deceased in their winding-sheets. But very few have seen this nocturnal apparition ; for whoever sees it is sure to die before a year's end, on which account all who hear it make haste to close their windows.

It is less difficult to guess the origin and object of the following story :—One night, after a tremendous storm, the sexton of Notre Dame de Gervais, in Pollet, was awakened by the ringing of the mass-bell. He jumped out of bed, conceiving that he had overslept himself, and that the priest had employed another person to ring. On entering the church, he saw the priest already at the altar, and a great number of fishermen assembled in silent devotion. Here knelt Jean, who had left the port half a year before and not returned ; there Paul, whose body, cast up by the sea, the sexton had himself assisted to bury. Overcome with horror, he could neither speak nor stir from the spot. At length the priest was proceeding to communicate, but could not. The host dropped from his hand, and his shriek of anguish was re-echoed by all present. At length the priest turned to the sexton and said to him : “ Master Pierre, my poor Pierre, don't you know me again—Regnauld, whose ship struck on Easter Monday upon the rock of Ailly and perished ? I vowed to have a mass performed for Notre Dame, and I forgot my vow. I would have now said this mass myself, in order to fulfil my vow ; but when I attempt to communicate, I feel all hell in my throat, I am on fire, master Pierre. Tell my son never to forget the masses that he promises to Notre Dame.”

Such stories produced their effect ; and even at the present day we see occasionally, though but rarely, the whole crew of a ship, which has outlived

a tempest, going on pilgrimage barefoot and in their shirts to some celebrated chapel in fulfilment of a vow. A vow of this kind made in a storm has—hundreds are ready to attest it—the immediate effect of doubling the crew. “Le navire est doublé,” is the exclamation by which the crew, in the last emergency, are excited to renewed exertions, and this cry alone has saved many a vessel. Faith can remove mountains, and why should it not have the effect of increasing the number of a ship’s crew! If but one father is preserved by it for his children, who will dare to smile scornfully at it!

The girls of Pollet have a superstitious notion of a different kind. These seek upon the beach a white stone of a particular shape, which they call *la pierre du bonheur*, and to which they ascribe the power of conferring prosperity, delivering them from danger, and bringing them in due time a good husband. How many thousand years old this practice is the gods of Gaul might perhaps be able to tell. It would not be very difficult to guess why the fishermen consider a cat as the devil, and are struck with horror when they find one on board their vessels; but it would be harder to explain why they should feel a similar horror at the mention of the name of a priest, and imagine that it brings them ill luck. In vain have I sought the grounds of this notion, and must therefore content myself with stating the fact.

The number thirteen is unlucky here, as in every



part of Normandy. It is also unlucky to overturn a salt-cellar, to lay a knife and fork across, to set a loaf on the table upside down; but whoever sits under a beam at an entertainment is sure to be the next who will be married. To discover the causes of all these whims of superstition would be a difficult task. Give the devil, like a woman, but a finger, and he will presently take the whole hand and all the rest. But enough on this subject. I am almost afraid that this register of superstition might lead the reader to suppose that the honest fishermen are, after all, very little better than those who are intimidated with a paternoster, or who conceive that in repeating that prayer they have done enough for a suffering fellow-creature. I will relate the history of one of them, which will serve to teach us better.

In the night of the 31st of August, 1777, in a most tremendous storm, a vessel attempted to run into the harbour of Dieppe. Boussard, the pilot, who was never missing when the tempest raged, was on the pier, and seeing that the captain of the ship made several false manœuvres, he called to him with his speaking trumpet, directing him what to do, and strove by gestures to render himself intelligible. Owing to the storm and the darkness, his efforts proved unavailing, and the ship struck about thirty fathoms above the pier. Every body, excepting Boussard, gave up the crew for lost. Determined to save them, he was going to tie a rope round his body, in order to carry it to the



ship; but his wife and children and his friends surrounded and besought him by all that was sacred not to rush uselessly into certain destruction. Boussard, listening only to the voice of humanity, reproached his friends with their cowardice, and at length prevailed upon them to take home his wife and children. Having tied one end of the rope round him and fastened the other to the pier, he plunged into the sea. Twenty times did the waves hurl him back upon the beach, and as often did he plunge again into the raging billows. A fresh wave flung him towards the ship, and he disappeared beneath her. A general cry of horror proclaimed his destruction. But he had only dived to lay hold of a sailor whom the sea had swept from the deck, and whom he contrived to take senseless to the shore. A last attempt to reach the ship proved successful; he climbed her side, and conveyed to the crew the rope by which they were drawn ashore one after another.

But Boussard had not yet finished his glorious work. Exhausted with his exertions, he was conducted by his friends to the nearest house, where he brought up the sea-water that he had swallowed. A gust of wind wafted to the shore the cry of a passenger who had been left behind, and Boussard soon learned that there was another fellow-creature to save. He felt his strength renewed, and, before those about him were aware, he had rushed out of the house, plunged again into the sea, and was battling with the same difficulties which he had

before encountered, and which he overcame with the like success. The passenger was saved. Eight out of ten persons owed their lives to his courageous exertions. Louis XVI. made him a present of a thousand francs, and settled on him a pension of three hundred. He was appointed keeper of the pier lighthouse—an office which has ever since been held by the Boussards, descending from father to son : and not a year has passed unmarked by deeds worthy of the first possessor. Close to the parapet of the pier of Dieppe is a pole covered with copper, to which is fastened a chain. Here, in every storm since 1777, whether in the night or the day, a Boussard has taken his station, clinging to the chain, and served as a warning voice to those whom danger and the tempestuous sea pursued into the harbour. And though the waves broke over him, though they washed him from his post of honour, rising from their bosom he would again give advice with his speaking trumpet, in defiance of the sea and all its efforts. Fifty times has a Boussard risked his life to save the lives of others. Napoleon ordered a house to be built for him close to the spot where the first Boussard performed his heroic achievement. He gave him the cross of honour, and not a marshal of them all is more worthy of the distinction, even though he assisted in gaining the battles of Austerlitz and Jena. For more than half a century, whenever there has been a vessel or a fellow-creature to save, the people have asked : “Have we no Boussard here ?”

When we have crossed the little bridge of the harbour of Dieppe, and find ourselves in a moment in a totally strange country, among people having other manners, other customs, and even another language, we naturally ask, whence this difference? Literary men have asked the same question, and attempted to solve it. One of these, Vitet, in his History of Dieppe, reveals the secret to his readers. Pollet, he says, comes from Poletto, the little compass, indicating the pole. The word points to Italy: the old costumes of the fishermen likewise remind us of Italy or Spain. Then again the pronunciation of the Polletais is very soft, and j in particular is always turned into z. Such are the grounds which induced M. Vitet to consider the Polletais as descended from Italians generally and Venetians in particular. He has overlooked the circumstance that one of the streets is even called Rue de la Lombarderie. This would have been an additional reason. I hope the reader will duly appreciate my generosity in supplying an adversary with arms before I attack him.

In my opinion, all these striking arguments prove very little or nothing. I believe, moreover, that the great majority of the fishermen and inhabitants of the coast of Normandy are of German origin. The proof deduced from the word Pollet I could very easily drive out of the field, or at least counterbalance by another etymology, were I to maintain that Pollet is derived from the North German *Pohl*—pole; and that Pollet is actually



situated upon a tract gained from the sea, upon which houses and hovels could not be built till poles or piles had been driven into the ground. As for the costume, that is Dutch full as much as Italian. If we would deduce with any degree of certainty the origin of the Polletais, there is a very simple way of doing so. The study of their language and manners, and of the popular dialect in particular, must necessarily show in words and turns whence they come, whether from the south or from the north. What I know about these I have picked up running, as it were ; but to me it appears that all I have yet mentioned bears a northern much more than a southern stamp. The traditions concerning the carriage and the ship of the dead belong, as the French would say, to the *fögs* of the Germanic regions. Another story, which the old dames of Pollet relate to their grandchildren, is as follows. One day, a great number of children were playing on the beach, when a little, very little man, *le petit homme rouge*, passed by, and the children began to make game of him. The little man was angry, and picked up stones, and threw them at the urchins. And the stones showered down upon them as if flung by a hundred hands, and drove them away in a great fright, but without doing them any harm. So the children got into a fishing-boat, but the little man followed and kept pelting away till they were forced to go below and hide themselves. But there they could distinctly hear the stones rattling upon the deck over their heads



for a full hour, so that they imagined that the whole ship would be covered and themselves buried under them. At last all was quiet. They ventured to peep, and behold, the little man and all the stones were gone; they saw not one left upon the deck. It cannot be doubted that this little man was a dwarf, a mountain-sprite, a near kinsman of the German Rübezahl's, and, as every body knows, these dwarfs were the mischievous offspring of northern imagination.

One day, two fishermen were going inland from Pollet. On reaching the top of the hill, they saw a little boy sitting by the road-side, and asked him what he was doing there. "I am resting," was the answer, "and shall then walk to Berneville," which is a league from Pollet. "Well, then," replied the fishermen, "you can go along with us, for that is our way too." As they went along, the boy contrived to amuse the fishermen with a hundred merry pranks, so that they were quite delighted with him. By and by, they came to the pond near Berneville. Here the boy laid hold of one of the fishermen, lifted him up like a shuttlecock, and threw him over the pond. He alighted unhurt on the other side. "You may bless your stars," said the boy, "that you sprinkled yourself with holy water this morning, otherwise you must infallibly have fallen into the pond."—The holy water is an addition of modern times: the dwarf and his tricks point again to the north.

Of the dialect of the Polletais I have not been

able to catch much, as they have borrowed from their neighbours a great many expressions in the language of common life, and my brief stay did not permit me to enter into long investigations. I only recollect once hearing a person, when speaking of the poppy, in French *pavot*, call it *mahon*, in German *Mohn*. Lastly, a practice which is likewise German, that of husbands buying, as it were, their wives of their parents, has not been entirely relinquished here, or at least it still lives in the memory of all.

These, however, are mere conjectures. They cannot acquire the force of proofs, unless verified by arguments deduced from language, manners, and customs. Any really national peculiarity, however trivial it may seem, is of the utmost importance in regard to the history of the people. The earth has been turned up, in order to find a coin, a ruin, and then to dispute most pertinaciously about their import, and to write books on the subject. Men have puzzled their brains to make out the meaning of a few signs and ciphers inscribed by a playful fancy upon an amulet. But very rarely has any one conceived the idea that every popular custom, every peculiar word of a national dialect, every usage, and every tradition, bears a stamp far more characteristic and more easy to decipher than any of the coins of the Upper or Lower Empire, which it has cost hundreds of thousands to dig out of their rubbish. I have nothing to say against that, for the whim gives bread to many

honest labourers : only it were to be wished that others would take the trouble to make inquiries where such inquiries might be productive of gain. Every people, every tribe, every village, is its own history, if one consults and has the skill to unravel its language, manners, customs, and traditions. In France, the revolution has swept away many of the peculiarities which previously subsisted among the people ; and, unless some acute observer shall soon arise to collect such traces of them as still remain, perhaps in ten or twenty years it may be totally impossible to find any : for even Pollet, which for centuries contrived to keep itself an alien to Dieppe, is daily losing more and more of its peculiar character ; and the language, customs, and usages, by which it was once distinguished, are fast wearing away. To work then, ye historical inquirers : fling overboard the lumber of erudition, and study in real life the life of the people and its history : that is the true, the purest source.



## CHAPTER XV.

Environs of Dieppe—Cité des Limes, an ancient Fortification attributed to the Belgic Gauls — M. Feret, librarian of Dieppe and his Researches—Popular Traditions current in the environs — Popular Festivals—Arques—Victory gained there over the Leaguers by Henry IV. — A Beggar Family — Varengeville — Manoir d'Ango—History of Jean Ango—Church of Varengeville; legend concerning it.

CHANCE has at times given me some smart slaps, but it has never failed afterwards to stroke the cheek that yet tingled from the last blow. I have in consequence arrived at so truly Christian a philosophy as patiently to hold forth the right cheek when I have been smitten on the left. At Dieppe again I had at first the luck of being unfortunate: all the strangers who had visited the town for the sake of sea-bathing were gone. That circumstance of itself would have been a subject of regret; but as these guests had left the place on the first of October, the public library had been closed on the same day, and this grieved me much, for, though I am by no means a bookworm, yet I hoped to have there found information on this or the other point. I resolved, therefore, at once to call on the librarian and to arrange the matter with him; and lucky it was that



I did so. M. Feret, librarian of Dieppe, is incontestably one of those men who have studied the history of their country with most industry and success. He offered immediately to accompany me to the library, where we stayed a considerable time; and I had occasion to congratulate myself on the disappointment which had forced me to make his personal acquaintance. He coincided in my notions of the importance of popular customs, traditions, and dialect. He shewed me in the library several Roman and Gallic antiquities, mostly dug up in the Cité des Limes; and when I mentioned my intention of inspecting this historical riddle, Feret offered to accompany me thither on the following day. A better guide and cicerone one could not well have, for he has made a particular study of this ancient fortification, and endeavoured by researches on the spot to ascertain something of its history.

Half a league from Dieppe, on the top of the cliff, you come to a dike or rampart of earth, thrown up in a semicircle of about two thousand yards, and having a ditch at its foot; whence there can be no doubt that this place was fortified at some remote period by the hand of man. This wall and ditch on the land side, and the cliff about sixty yards in height towards the sea, defended those who were within the enclosure from any sudden surprise. Places fortified by walls and ditches are in general not very remarkable; they are to be found every where, and belonging to all the periods of history;

but these seem to be the work of a gigantic race. Such at least is the impression produced upon the mind by the wall, in many places more than sixty feet high, and by the extent of the fortification, capable of containing an army of several hundred thousand men. I am not aware that there exists in Europe another historical monument of the kind on so large a scale.

Within the fortification you perceive, especially along the wall, several hollows, all of them nearly in the form of a blunt half-moon. Researches in some of these have convinced Feret that they were in ancient times the sites of habitations. There were found in them pieces of Gallic urns, ashes, and bones, burned and unburned, also stone axes, finished and unfinished, and some coins of the period antecedent to the conquest of Gaul by the Romans. Among the bones dug up were several which are supposed not to belong to any of the animal species now known in Europe.

In the left half of the enclosure was found a series of hillocks, which, on examination, proved to be barrows, or burial-places; on one side of these graves was discovered a channel, also in the form of a half-moon, constructed of stones laid one upon another; and Feret is of opinion that it served to admit a current of air to the spot where the dead, whose ashes have been found, were burned. Lastly, on digging about the middle of the wall, near the margin of the cliff, there were discovered the ruins of a Roman building, and in it bones and skulls,

likewise Roman vases, glass rings, hair-pins, and coins of the emperors.

Who constructed this gigantic work ? is a question which naturally occurs to every mind, and there the dispute commences. There is not one of the races that, so far as the records of history extend, ever set foot in Normandy, to which it has not been attributed. The English, the Normans, Charlemagne, the Romans, the Gauls, the Saxons, the Belgians, have all had their advocates. The two hypotheses which have maintained their ground to the present day are, firstly that of Feret, which represents the Cité des Limes as a *Belgo-Gallic oppidum*, whither, according to Cæsar, the Gauls, having dispersed, retired on the approach of an enemy, with wives, children, and effects ; and secondly, that of another investigator, M. Fallue, who considers it as a Roman-Gallic work, and connects it with other similar fortifications, though on a smaller scale, in Normandy, which, according to him, were constructed to protect the country against the attacks of the northern Germans, and especially the Saxons. Both hypotheses are supported by a great display of erudition, which struck terror into a poor loungee like myself, when I ventured to turn over the books in which they are propounded ; but I must confess that I am rather disposed to coincide in the notions of Feret.

One remark, however, I will venture to subjoin. I have read here and there descriptions of the American antiquities left by a civilization of which no



other traces exist, and I was strongly reminded of the latter. These gigantic walls, enclosing a tract of some miles, capable of harbouring the population of a district two hundred miles in circumference, defying the revolutions of ages, of nations, nay of the earth itself, seem, like those American ruins, to indicate an extinct civilization. Among the coins that have been found there is one on which is a head decorated with feathers in the manner customary with the savages of America — a circumstance that served still more to remind me of those mute witnesses of by-gone times in another hemisphere.

Upon the whole, I am no friend of ruins and monuments whose language we no longer understand; but it is impossible to pass the *Cité des Limes* without pausing in astonishment and admiration. If these walls could speak, if one of the sleepers in those graves could rise and relate to us what has happened during his slumber of thousands of years, the whole phalanx of the literati would fall upon him and kill him outright, because he had disturbed their dreams and spoiled their sport, which, by the by, no dead dreamer has a right to do.

In going and returning, Feret related much that was interesting to me. When he first commenced his researches here, the wise in their own conceit set him down for a fool, who was throwing away his own money and that of his friends; for a society had been formed at Dieppe to defray the expense of the excavations. Presently, the antiquities which had been discovered began to be talked of, and then



these wise men plumply declared that Feret was a sly fellow, who buried over night what he dug up in the morning. At length the labourers found a skeleton in the ruins of the Roman habitations; and in two days the whole town and the surrounding country were talking of the discovery, and it was universally reported that a general, with two crosses of honour about his neck, had been dug up in Cæsar's camp, as the Cité des Limes is called by the common people. The good folks probably thought that they could not do too much honour to one who for nearly two thousand years had been an inmate of Cæsar's camp, nay, who might even have been himself a Cæsar. The anecdote is characteristic enough of Dieppe and its environs.

The Cité des Limes has other wonders besides this general and his decorations. It was natural that these gigantic works should operate upon the imagination of a poetic people. Animating them in its own way, it gave birth to the following story:—In clear, moonshiny nights, about the time of the full moon in September, the passenger coming from Dieppe sees a great number of young females of exquisite beauty, standing around a table, on which are spread wares, apparel, and trinkets of all sorts. When any one approaches the table to look at the commodities, the beautiful damsels presently surround him, joking and toying with him, till at length they so completely entangle him in the net of their charms, that he follows them involuntarily to the edge of the cliff, where, amidst acclamations and

scornful laughter, they tumble him headlong into the sea.

Who knows but this tradition may have as high historical import as those remains of the ancient Cité des Limes, dug up on its site? Perhaps there once dwelt in them a conquering race, which, having attained a higher point of cultivation than the conquered, offered for sale to the latter the productions of its luxury at a fair held there some time in September; whereupon the elders and the priests of the vanquished strove to secure their youth from the influence of the new civilisation by this tale. All popular traditions owe their origin to some circumstance or other, and it would be worth while to study them from this point of view: the skeleton most assuredly belongs in general to history; the imagination of the people has created merely the form in which it is clothed.

In a village situated on the opposite side of Dieppe, on the road to Caudebec, a tradition has been current from time immemorial, that females covered with white veils are to be seen at night on a certain spot, and researches on that spot have proved that it was a burial place during the Roman sway in Gaul. This tradition, then, has outlived the Franks, the Normans, the English, and the French: for it must assuredly have originated at the time when the cemetery, as such, still worked upon the imagination of the people. In another village, situated on the left bank of the river Dieppe, the credulous frequently saw horsemen in

white scampering over the fields, and turning up the ground with their lances. Tradition added, that in ancient times these horsemen had been defeated by other horsemen in red, and that the former came to look for their slain comrades. There can be no doubt that a battle was once fought here. Perhaps the tradition refers back to the time of the Romans, for it is well known that the Roman cavalry wore white mantles. Who were the horsemen in red it would be more difficult to decide.

The traditions on the left side of the Dieppe are more Roman, those on the right more German, in their nature. The river was probably the boundary between the old German Belgians and the Gauls properly so called. Another tradition, which still survives among the people on this side of the river, reminds us of the high respect in which matrimony was held by the Germans. According to this tradition, old maids were doomed after death to draw an iron harrow in hell. But the names of a great number of villages point still more decidedly than these traditions to the Germans, the Germano-Belgians, or the Saxons, who once dwelt in these parts. Thus Saqueville is in Latin *Villa Saxonis*, and Anglisqueville must derive its name from the Angles.

In regard to the popular festivals, the river forms again a decided boundary between the inhabitants of the two banks. The feast of Epiphany, Twelfth-day, is held throughout all Normandy, as far as Dieppe. Farther eastward, towards Picardy,



on the other hand, this day is not a popular, but only a church festival. The children here celebrate the festival of St. Nicholas in its stead. In the environs of Dieppe, indeed, it is not the day on which presents are made to children, as throughout all Belgium and along the Rhine, but merely a day of amusement for them, when they go about with paper lanterns of various colours fastened to the ends of long sticks. In Eu, on the contrary, it is on this day that presents are made to children. In the immediate environs of Dieppe, as well as farther inland towards the Seine, children have presents made them on Mid-lent Sunday. On that day they put a wooden shoe in the fireplace, and *Micarême*, whom they figure to themselves as a kind of fairy, drops the gifts into it. This wooden shoe is also met with along the Rhine at the festival of St. Nicholas.

To me this gradual blending of the feast of St. Nicholas with another seems not wholly unimportant to the historical inquirer. It is well-known that the first Christian priests adopted as much as possible of the ceremonies, at least, of Paganism. That the feast of St. Nicholas may be a holiday for children, even without its presents, is not doubtful in the environs of Dieppe; but without them it has a totally different character from that which it presents in the whole of ancient Belgium, as far as the Rhine, where it still exists. The inference that this was a festival for children before the time of St. Nicholas and his gifts seems



to me not too bold. If it was a Pagan festival of the ancient Germano-Belgians, its confinement between the Rhine and the Seine, which otherwise could not be easily accounted for, is perfectly natural. But enough of this. I merely wished to show, by one example, the historical importance of such trifles, as most historians might deem them, in order to justify my partiality for such speculations.

I was present that same evening at an historical discussion, which took place at my quarters in Dieppe. One of my fellow-lodgers, for the time being, had been making an excursion with his wife to Arques: he returned full of all that he had seen, and began to overflow as soon as he saw the landlord. He could not find terms strong enough to express how interesting his visit to Arques had proved. He had minutely explored the field of battle.

"Every traveller that comes to our town," said our host, "thinks like you; and there is not one but treats himself to a sight of Arques."

"It is, indeed, a most interesting place."

"If one did but know," resumed the landlord, "who it was that fought there."

"Why, Henry IV. to be sure—every body knows that."

"Right! every body does know that; but with whom did he fight?—that is the secret: some say with the Flemings and the Belgians, others even talk of the English; but I rather think it was the Gauls, from whom we are all descended."

The stranger looked with some surprise at our learned host, and then very calmly replied: "You are wrong, sir. Henry IV. defeated the *Ligue* (League) at Arques."

"Ah! yes, the *ligne* (line), against which he sent the *cavalry*, as the little corporal always used to do."

With these two technical terms mine host had got upon a field with which he was well acquainted. He had been an hussar under Napoleon, and served in Spain; the two words, *line* and *cavalry*, had touched the most sonorous chords of his heart, and long did they continue to vibrate. I have no mind to leave Normandy, and to transport myself along with him to Spain. At any rate, this conversation proves what fruit Feret's researches have produced among the people; for there can be no doubt that the sceptical erudition of our soldier-landlord had merely confounded two places—the field of battle of Arques and the Cité des Limes—in order to send out Henry IV. against the Belgo-Gauls.

This learned discussion helped to confirm me in my resolution to go the next day to Arques. One of the most beautiful walks to be found far and near leads to this place. At setting out, you proceed for some distance over the middle of the hill, on the left of Dieppe, and enjoy a delicious view of the valley, the town, the harbour, and the sea. You then come to an alley of lofty trees, whose boughs form living arcades over your head. At length the

village, with its church, and near it the ruins of the castle, appear before you.

The castle, seated on a solitary elevation, commands picturesque views on all sides. It was built by William count de Talou, uncle of William the Bastard. It was taken by Philip Augustus, but restored to Richard Cœur de Lion by the peace of 1196. In later times it was alternately in the possession of the French and English, till it was finally taken by the former under Charles VII. Henry IV. cannonaded the army of the League from this castle. This once celebrated structure is now a ruin, and is daily falling more and more to decay. In 1780 an ordinance was issued, permitting the inhabitants of Arques to employ the then remaining materials of the castle for useful buildings. The palace was pulled down for the purpose of building huts. Those mills in the valley, those farm-houses, those barns, that cot which belongs to a day-labourer, have been built with the stones of the proud castle. I have not read any book relating to Dieppe and its environs but what laments the Vandalism of the age, which presumes to lay hands on the fallen ruins of such a castle and to convert them into mean buildings. Spare your tears, ye sentimental antiquaries, for a better occasion, and consider what tears of blood were mingled with the mortar which cemented the stones of the castle of Arques!

Arques was a town so early as the ninth century, and in the eleventh it was one of the most important



places in Normandy. Dieppe has acted the same part towards it, as in later times Havre has done towards Harfleur. Arques is now an inconsiderable village, interesting only on account of its beautiful and romantic environs and its historical recollections. I shall advert to one of them only. Arques witnessed the first decisive victory won by Henry IV. over the League, after his accession to the crown, in 1589. From the castle you overlook the whole field of battle, and to the tactician it may be a great treat to study there the movements of the two armies; I do not grudge it him. Somewhat more or less fog, and the great king might have died a little one. But perhaps not: Henry IV. was the expression of a want of the times. It was decreed that royalty, then supported by the people, should annihilate the noblesse, and set itself up in the place of the latter. Hence it was that Henry conquered the League; the crop was ripe, no matter what was the name of the reaper. With Henry IV., for whom preceding monarchs had done much to clear the way, absolute monarchy in France gained the final victory over the nobility: and under Louis XIV. it attained its highest elevation, to begin rolling down the hill on the other side, crushing all that should strive to stop its descent.

How Henry acquired the name of Father of the People it is now-a-days not difficult to say. He annihilated the last vestiges of popular liberty, he intrigued with every woman, and he squandered the treasures of the nation. But all this is sooner



forgotten than a hearty shake of the hand given by a king to an humble citizen. What may be effected by such means is now no secret. He walked about in the streets of Paris and talked with the shopkeepers ; he once went into the cottage of a peasant, and sat down to table with him. This was the way in which he acquired popularity, and became the Father of the People. History, whose eyes are frequently not opened till long after the events which it records, is gradually doing justice to this monarch ; but this merit it will not deny him, that on many occasions he displayed a truly chivalrous spirit, as at Arques, where, when one of his wings was beaten, he rushed almost alone among the enemy, exclaiming : " Is there not one brave fellow who will follow his king ? "

In the army of the League, as well as in that of the king, there were bands of German mercenaries called Landsknechts. Those of the League went over to the royalists at the beginning of the battle, and afterwards, when it became general, they fell upon their own countrymen and the king's troops. Owing to them, victory seemed for a time to incline to the Leaguers ; but when, in spite of their treachery, the royalists prevailed, they were slaughtered without mercy. What nation has not produced traitors !—but there is none to share with the Germans—for the Flemings and the Swiss are of German origin—the disgrace of having produced Landsknechts. Not a battle was fought in which the French did not bear a part ; but they were

always volunteers, and scarcely ever chaffered away their blood and their lives for money. The worst of it is that the race of the Landsknechts does not yet seem to be yet extinct; for it frequently appeared to me as if I saw them in Napoleon's battles twenty or thirty years ago. When we consider how readily these Landsknechts lent a hand, as soon as their hire was dropped into it, in the oppression of the people, we shall be sensible that the Germans have a stain upon their national character, which time and change of conduct alone can wipe away.

I had resolved to go on from Arques to Varengeville. I wished to see how the residence of a citizen of Dieppe looked in its ruins after that of a sovereign of the country. The road, leading up and down hill, was rather fatiguing. To make amends, however, I had frequently the finest views, sometimes of Dieppe and the sea, at others of the charming environs of the town. I passed through Appeville, where the Scie forms a wild and deep valley. From Appeville my road led past the wood of Hautot. Here, under a lofty tree, I found a beggar family, man, woman, and several children, seated at their dinner. Having frequently witnessed such scenes, I had occasionally made inquiries, and learned the following particulars concerning this class of vagrants. In the whole of Upper Normandy there are great numbers of persons who live entirely upon the charity of the peasants, and by stealing fruit, poultry, eggs, &c. This condition is hereditary, as the dignity of peer formerly was.

It is not charity alone—for fear contributes its share—that bestows food and shelter on these colonies of itinerant beggars. In every solitary farm-yard of Upper Normandy there is a place which stands open night and day for the reception of these mendicants. This kind of lodging is legalised, as it were, for the farmer demands of them their travelling book—how they came by such a book I know not, as in other parts of the continent it is given to travelling artisans only—and keeps it till the next morning, lest they should rob him in the night. Shelter is never refused, as such a refusal would expose the farm-buildings to the risk of being burned down. A piece of bread they obtain at every house; but it would be too dry to eat without butter or meat, and a fowl in the pot was promised by Henry IV. to all Frenchmen. Accordingly, the beggars fish for fowls with hooks, which they bait with a bit of the bread given to them by the owner of the said fowls. At the appointed hour, the whole family meet in a wood, and there feast upon their prize.

At Dieppe, I was told that these happy mortals, who are strangers to care, living without law, being either above or below it, contract marriages in their own way. The beggar-lad seeks himself a lass of his own caste, and merely asks her if she is willing to be his helpmate. If she consents, the business is settled, and they proceed to the solemn ceremony of marriage. A fowl, the produce of their fishery, is put into an earthen pot and boiled.



As soon as it is done, the bridegroom takes up his stick and strikes the pot with it. The marriage is valid for so many years as there are pieces. I cannot vouch for it that this practice really prevails; but as a report, it serves to characterise these colonies of vagrants, for it shows, at least, what the people think of them.

It would be very difficult to determine the origin of these Norman gipsies, and to decide whether they are descendants of a subdued race, which preferred the freedom of the beggar to the law of the conqueror; for, even though they may themselves have old traditions, it is almost impossible to get any information from these people. I am not aware that any writer has yet mentioned these Norman beggar-colonies.

It was with such recollections that I arrived at the village of Varengeville, composed of a number of very handsome farm-houses. Whether Ango's residence in the village may have contributed to its flourishing appearance I know not, but I am inclined to believe so, for most Norman villages wear a very different aspect. Near it is situated the chateau or *manoir* of Ango.

Jean Ango was contemporary with Francis I. He was the Jacques Cœur of his age. The son of an opulent father, he contrived to amass immense wealth. His ships navigated every sea; he lent money and even a fleet to his sovereign; and when a foreign monarch, the king of Portugal, had offended him by taking one of his vessels, he equipped



a squadron, which destroyed and plundered several towns and villages in the environs of Lisbon, and filled the capital itself with consternation. The king of Portugal conceived that a sovereign only durst act thus, and, on learning that the fleet was French, he sent to Francis I. to demand an explanation of such a procedure in time of peace. Francis referred the messenger to Ango, intimating that his master was at war with him only, and that of course with him he had to make his peace. Ango received the envoy with the utmost magnificence, and recalled his fleet. Even in those days, it was deemed prudent to elevate men capable of lending to a king above the ranks of the *bourgeoisie*, and so Ango was created count and appointed governor of Dieppe. But what he had acquired as burgher he was doomed to lose as count. Ango grew vain, and squandered prodigious sums to gratify his vanity: he grew proud, and treated those who had assisted him to amass wealth as though he had been born a count. In this manner he estranged from him the citizens of Dieppe; and when, having involved himself in embarrassments by his foolish extravagance, he was forced to be their debtor, the storm burst and overthrew the edifice of his grandeur. The man who had seen kings humbled before him was destined, towards the close of life, to deplore in solitude the ruin of his fortune.

The Manoir d'Ango bears to this day traces of the former magnificence of its founder. Though the hand of Time has made havoc with it, there are

still to be seen arcades and pillars, which attest the luxury and the art employed in the construction of this edifice. Two medallions carved in stone, if they really are, as they are said to be, likenesses of Francis I. and Ango, attest his vanity also; while you are strongly reminded of his misfortunes by the circumstance that the proud structure is now a ruin, and the dwelling of a lowly husbandman.

From Ango's chateau, I went to the church of Varengenville. It is situated on the margin of the steep cliff. The church itself is not more remarkable than a thousand others; but its site, apart from the village, high above the sea, and looking down upon it and upon the rugged rocks which here form the coast, scooped into a semicircle several miles in extent, is peculiarly striking and solemn. Seating myself upon the wall surrounding the churchyard, I indulged for some time in the most delicious reveries.

"If that is true," I at last exclaimed, "then must the devil be a stupid devil, indeed!" A popular legend, which I had read, or picked up somewhere or other, had come into my head. Many hundred years ago, the village of Varengenville having considerably increased, its inhabitants resolved to build a church precisely in the centre of the place, that it might be handy for every body. So they fell to work; but what they did in the day the devil pulled down at night, and built up again on the spot where the church now stands. This continued for several days and nights, till the people

of Varengeville were tired out, and resolved to finish building where the devil had begun. Nor could they have played him a more scurvy trick. This devil was so simple as merely to calculate that the villagers would have a couple of hundred paces further to go to church, without considering that sublime Nature would there preach them such a sermon as could not fail to make an impression on the most obdurate heart. Had the celebrated Eulenspiegel then been the devil's clerk of the works, he could not have obeyed more literally the injunction to take care to let all the churches be placed as far as possible from their respective villages.

The sun was fast declining. Gladly would I have tarried to witness his setting, but I had still two good leagues to walk to Dieppe. To wish me a good night's rest, would have been a work of supererogation : nor did the devil, to whom I had told such home truths, disturb my slumbers by unpleasant dreams.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Excursion to Eu—Conversation at a Bookseller's—Superstitious Notions—Belief in Were-wolves—The Market-place—The Church—Sculpture representing the Entombment of Christ—The Chateau—Collection of Portraits of the House of Bourbon—Historical Recollections of the Chateau—Treport—The Pier—St. Valeri—Fecamp—The Abbey Church—The Precieux Sang, and Legend respecting it—Pilgrimages made to Fecamp on account of it—Spring impregnated with it—Abbots of Fecamp—Wealth of the Abbey—Ruins of a Castle—Exploit of Bois-Rosé—The Casino.

THE Bresle, which runs through Eu, and discharges itself into the sea at Treport, forms the northern boundary of Normandy, which it separates from Picardy. A sort of diligence, or omnibus, runs daily from Dieppe to Eu, and an excursion thither is well worth the trouble.

We arrived about nine o'clock at Eu, and as I had left Dieppe fasting, my first care was to remedy this inconvenience. At three coffee-houses I inquired if I could have a *café au lait*, and it was not till I came to the third, and till the maid had consulted the daughter of the house, and the daughter the mother, that I received an affirmative answer. In the other two houses, the people alleged that



they served coffee only, and had nothing to do with milk. In the last, they did condescend to accommodate me, but I was obliged to pay as dearly for my breakfast as I should have done at the most fashionable coffee-house in the Palais royal itself.

After this preparation, I sallied forth on my exploratory travels. I stepped into a bookseller's shop, to see if I could meet with any publication concerning Eu and its environs. A very dry extract from the *Journal départemental de la France*, by M. Estrancelin, deputy of the department of the Somme, was the only thing that I could find; but the mistress of the shop was extremely communicative, and I had a long talk with her. She knew a great deal, but very little about Eu; and I really believe it was not her fault.

I led her, by degrees, to the subject of superstition, and she told me that it was more and more on the decline. During the time of the Empire, the belief in the old bugbears had become nearly extinct; the race of the *loups-garoux*, or werewolves, had died off, and it was not till the Restoration that a few had again entered the country, though it was only one here and there who credited their existence. They might, she conceived, have followed the allied armies like the other wolves. In the years 15 and 16, several persons took a great deal of pains to bring them again into vogue. She then told me a frightful story about herself having, as she thought, been once attacked by a were-wolf, but, to her great relief, she soon discovered that it was only Hector, her neighbour's yard-dog.

It is likely enough that I listened to all this with a look of incredulity, for she kept adducing fresh arguments to prove that, in the first years of the Restoration, there actually were people who took infinite trouble to restore the were-wolves and other phantoms. She put into my hand a book entitled, "*Relation concernant les Evénements qui sont arrivés à un Laboureur de la Reauste, dans les premiers mois de 1816,*" in which a man named Martin, of Gallardon, near Chartres, relates that the archangel Michael appeared to him, and directed him to go to the king and tell him that he must take care to have the Sunday kept more holy, that all his officers were heretics, that he ought to drive them to the devil, and then to fill their places with pious Christians.

On the appearance of this work, the prioress of Eu assembled all the godly maids and matrons of the town, and read passages out of it to them ; and it was not long before the were-wolf was at his old pranks. But very few saw him in spirit and in truth. Ever since the Revolution of July, he has totally forsaken Eu : he is said to be afraid of the paving stones.

From the bookseller's I went to a young man in Eu, to whom I had a letter of recommendation, and he took me through the town, to the church, and to the castle.

Our way to the church led me through the market-place. I make a point, wherever I go, not to omit taking a peep at the market. A much greater noise prevailed at Eu than is generally found in the markets of Normandy ; I could not help making this remark

to my companion. He replied that this was very natural, as a great number of those who attend the market are Picards, who are exceedingly talkative. He pointed out several groupes of them, and, after my attention had been called to the difference, I could readily distinguish the Normans from the Picards. The latter are mostly spare and slender, with rather long faces, and open countenances, which are frequently lit up by a passing smile. But then their tongues are incessantly going.

The Norman, on the contrary, is much shorter and more robust, has a *tête carrée*, as the French call it, says little, but thinks the more, as a piercing eye and an arch look very frequently tell you. It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, and indeed unnecessary, to efface these provincial distinctions. The Revolution has done quite enough, inasmuch as it has put an end to mutual antipathies and their causes, by abolishing all exclusive privileges and advantages enjoyed by certain provinces of France in preference to others.

My companion conducted me to the church, and there left me for a few minutes, having some urgent business to attend to. The church is large, without being grand. On one side is a sort of dark hall, where the interment of Christ is represented in sculptures. This struck me only because I had seen a similar chapel at Dieppe, and afterwards I found another of the kind at Fecamp. The *chiaroscuro* prevailing in the chapel, the stillness of the whole church, in which there was nobody but the



sexton and myself, and the tolling of the bell proclaiming the death of a fellow-creature, produced in my mind such a feeling of awe as I stood before the grave of Christ, that the stone figures seemed almost to be instinct with life.

My cicerone returned, and he had to seek me some time before he found me in the sepulchral chapel, absorbed in reverie. He looked at me with some surprise, and I dare say that, in his evening circle, he would have some witticism to launch at his devoutly sentimental companion. We went together into a subterraneous chapel, where there are half-a-dozen tombs of the counts of Eu. It was impossible for these to make any impression on me in the presence of my loquacious guide: he was not a Norman, but from Marseilles.

From the church we proceeded to the chateau. The exterior has some resemblance in miniature to the Tuileries. The roof and the numerous chimneys, at least, are imitations of that palace. Louis Philip, the restorer, or, more properly speaking, the builder of the chateau, might here indulge before 1830 in that long dream which at length was realised, without being disturbed by external phenomena. The interior of the chateau, though not on a large scale, is rich and handsome in its kind. The apartments would suit me better than those of any other palace, because they are smaller, and of course more comfortable. The windows command a very beautiful view of the country towards Treport and the sea.



The chief ornament of the chateau is one of the most complete collections of portraits of all the scions of the house of Bourbon, to which are added portraits of many other princes and celebrated men. The duchess of Orleans, wife of the murdered duke of Guise, commenced this collection. The Revolution expelled these pictures; but Louis Philip replaced them in their former situation, and completed the collection. There cannot be a better school for any one who wishes to study physiognomy. Lavater might have held lectures here. One of these pictures I should certainly not have introduced, had I been prince or king. I mean that of Margaret Maultasche, duchess of Firol. Never in my life did I see an uglier beggar or gipsy-woman. It is not judicious to show the stupid vulgar that princes and princesses have not even the scurvy privilege of beauty, and that Nature makes us mortals, whether king or pauper, plain or handsome, just as she may be in the humour. The painters of the duchess of Berry were much more discreet in this respect. I have seldom seen a pair of finer eyes than those of her portrait, in the library at Dieppe. Time did not permit me to bestow due attention on the thousand and odd portraits of this army of princes. What a sum the entire collection must have cost!

The park is—but it would be useless to describe it, for these parks are all as like one another as brother and sister; and still more useless to employ such adjectives as beautiful, charming, picturesque,

and all the rest of them. I shall therefore merely say, the park is—a park. Enjoying from certain points magnificent views of the sea, you here find clumps of trees, there arbours, water, and lastly, a table, on which Louis Philip has had this inscription engraved: “C’est ici que les Guises tirent leur conseil au 16<sup>me</sup> siècle!” to commemorate the conspiracy of a prince against his sovereign.

The chateau is rich in historical recollections. The first dukes of Normandy occasionally resided in it. William the Conqueror here solemnized his marriage with Matilda of Flanders. Here he received Harold, the envoy of England, who afterwards contested the crown with him, after both princes had endeavoured to outwit one another at Eu; the one extorting an oath of fidelity, and the other overreaching him by means of that very oath.

The families of Lusignan, Brienne, Artois, Bourbon, Cleves, Lorraine, and Orleans, were successively proprietors of this castle. Louis XI., in his contest with the nobility, ordered it to be demolished, together with a great number of other castles. It was afterwards rebuilt, and we have seen that here the Guises held consultation, as Louis Philip says. It came into the possession of the house of Orleans in the 17th century. Its owner, prince Louis Joseph de Lorraine, contracted debts at a time when even nobles were obliged to pay them; his property was taken in execution, agreeably to a decision of the parliament of Paris in 1660 and 1662, and Eu was bought by Anna

Maria Louise of Orleans, who expended immense sums in its embellishment.

The Revolution turned the chateau into an hospital. The Restoration gave it back to Louis Philip, and he transferred it to his son, the duke of Orleans, in that well-known compact by which the provident father gave away all he had.

I am sorry that I have not at hand the work of Jules Janin, and all those charming *feuilletons* of the *Journal des Debats*, the *Temps*, and other papers, which celebrated the visit paid by the king to Eu five or six years ago. I would translate something from them, compose a melody to it, or adapt it to the tune of the *Marseillaise*. It is inconceivable what monkeys men make of themselves. Just touch the drum, put the pipes to your lips, and they fall a-capering immediately. But Jules Janin, with his antics, is the most diverting monkey there is among all the former lacqueys of the court. If he was mine, I would put on him a red jacket, and take him to all the chief cities and towns in the world, and exhibit him for the amusement of the good people of the said cities and towns.

But enough concerning Eu. I have yet to see Treport, and must contrive to get back to Dieppe this evening.

Treport is half a league distant from Eu. Before the Revolution there was an abbey at this place. The fishermen now are obliged to make shift without it; and the village seems to be no worse off on that account. As I intended to make



some stay at Etretat, another fishing village, I wished to see Treport, just *en passant*. It consists of a long line of houses near the harbour and on the hill. Half way up this hill stands a venerable-looking church, whence you have an exquisite view of magnificent Nature. Whether the devil had any hand in this or not I cannot tell.

The sturdy fishermen were busily engaged on the quays, some in unloading their boats, others in preparing for sea. The women, mostly short but well made, with full bosoms and healthy-looking, expressive faces, were carrying heavy loads of salt, which the men took on board, for curing the fish caught while out at sea. The inhabitants of the village in general, even the ordinary fishermen, are in good circumstances. Every family has its own house, or at least a share in the house which it inhabits. The sea supplies them with sustenance, and, owing to the activity of the men, the industry, sobriety, and economy of the women, there is scarcely a family but has laid by something at the year's end. Not one of those greedy-looking visages that one sees wherever merchant-vessels come, is to be met with here; every face, male and female, bears the stamp of honesty and goodnature.

I went upon the little pier to rest myself for a moment. There some hearty boys were playing with round pebbles, so that the sea, the provident mother of these people, supplies even the children with playthings. It is easy to discover in the boy the daring seaman of future years. Beside me sat



two gray-headed invalid sailors, who repaired thither to see the vessels come in and go out, and to ascertain the direction of the wind. I had been chatting for a while with the younger of these veterans, before the elder joined us. As he approached, the other said, with a sort of respect : "Voila le veteran de Treport !" The speaker, his junior by three years, was eighty-five. Both had served during the war, and the elder carried his crippled arm in a sling. I asked them various questions, but they could only half understand me. When I inquired concerning the customs of the fishermen, they began to tell me about their campaigns ; and when I asked them to relate some of their remarkable adventures, the elder informed me, that once in a storm he made a vow to walk in his shirt barefoot to St. —, I forget the name, and that he performed his vow. It is exceedingly difficult to understand these good people, or to render yourself intelligible to them, owing to the limited extent of their language, the many technical expressions, and the patois. A woman, who presently joined us, told us a long story, of which, had I even been a woman myself, I could not have guessed a word. They might have conspired in my presence without danger against the lives of all the kings in the world.

Tired of listening to words which produced no more effect upon me than the clack of a mill, I retired to the other end of the pier, where I could enjoy in quiet the beautiful prospect which here

presents itself. In ancient times, the sea formed a bay as far as Eu. Now this bay, covered with rich meadows and corn-fields, is intersected by the river, hedges, and alleys, and bordered by gently-rising verdant eminences. On one side of this semicircle of hills is situated Treport, with its church, hewn, as it were, out of the rock ; on the left is another village with a church, the name of which I have forgotten, and in the centre Eu, with its chateau and its abbey. And the foreground to this lovely, rural landscape, when viewed from the pier, is formed by the harbour of Treport and the sea, and these constitute a magnificent fore or back-ground, according to the position of the spectator.

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Ten years ago, I should have had many cogent reasons for preferring an excursion on foot along the coast of Upper Normandy. This mode of travelling would have been not only cheaper, but more pleasant and more fertile in incidents. Now, I have quite as many, for preferring the diligence : but the love of convenience is at the back of them all, and this is sure to gain the victory.

Beyond St. Valerie en Caux there is a high hill, which begins in the town itself, and which afforded us time to walk through it ; so I could transport myself in thought to the days when William the Conqueror embarked his troops here for the invasion of England. But the few fishing smacks, the empty streets, the quietness of the town, scarcely

permitted the imagination to dwell on this idea, and the voice of the conductor, calling to us from the top of the hill to rejoin the carriage, dispelled it entirely.

On reaching Fecamp, I had half a day before me, and I employed it in delivering my letters of recommendation, and looking about the town. One of these letters was to Mons. F., who is not more distinguished for profound erudition as an antiquary, than for amiable qualities as a man of the world, and who promised to accompany me next morning to show me the abbey, and whatever else is worth seeing at Fecamp.

I spent the rest of the day in exploring the town and the harbour. Fecamp is but a single street, half a league long, of about fifteen hundred houses, and nine or ten thousand inhabitants. Most of the houses are of recent construction, and give a modern look to the town, which is said to have been a place of some importance under the first race of the Frankish sovereigns. The port is large enough to hold at least ten times as many ships as I saw in it, whence it may be inferred that the trade of the town was formerly more extensive than it is at present.

The name of Fecamp is said to be derived either from Fisci-campus, or Fici-campus; in the former case, because the Romans there received the tribute levied upon the surrounding country. The derivation from Fici-campus I shall have occasion to explain hereafter. The adjacent country was called at the time of the Roman conquest *Caleti*, which

antiquaries derive from the German word *kalt*, cold, though it is not clear how the Germano-Belgians, to whom it must have owed this denomination, and who came from a more northern country, could have found this cold enough to deserve such a name. The winds which prevail here, and the sea-air render the climate much less cold than that of the region which the Belgians had forsaken.

The abbey, the ruins of an ancient castle, and the harbour, are the only remarkable objects of this town. Mons. F. called the day after my arrival to take me to the abbey. I was in the best humour in the world for receiving instruction. When we entered the church, we found there Mons. F.'s daughter and a friend of her's, who, having never seen the abbey, availed herself of this opportunity. The abbey is the offspring of several different centuries, as is evident in the style of the individual parts. The whole does not produce an agreeable effect, for the church is disproportionately long for its height. There was formerly a partition in the middle of the nave, which served as a point of repose for the eye and gave equilibrium to the church; but this has been pulled down, that the priest may be seen from one end of the building to the other. Another expedient for making old things new, which is employed throughout all France, is to whitewash the churches. This honour has been conferred on the abbey of Fecamp, and it looks in consequence very like an old maid in the frock in which she went to be confirmed. This



mania for whitewashing and painting the ancient monuments of architecture and sculpture has degenerated at Fecamp into real Vandalism in regard to an interment of the Virgin Mary. On the right of the abbey is a chapel containing a groupe executed in stone, which is not without merit as a work of art. During the revolution it suffered much: several of the figures were beheaded. To make amends for this mutilation, plaster heads have been attached to the stone bodies, and they have all been painted red, and yellow, and brown, so that they look extremely droll. But the best of the joke is that, for want of other heads, that of a Cato has been joined to the body of St. Peter, Voltaire's to that of St. Mark, and Cicero's to St. James's. They all look astounded, and the question is, whether the miracle which is taking place before their eyes, or that which struck off the heads of the saints and clapped their's in their places, is the cause of their astonishment.

But by far the most remarkable thing in this church is the *précieux sang*. Close to the church is a shop, where you may buy a little book about the "precious blood," and beads, medals, &c. stained with the blood. I shall translate the history of the invaluable relic, as given in that publication. It is headed "Histoire du précieux sang de Notre Seigneur Jesus Christ, qui repose en l'Abbaye de la Très-Sainte Trinité de Fecamp." The history then begins thus:—

"Joseph of Arimantia and Nicodemus, (secret

disciples of our divine Redeemer Jesus Christ, whom the Jews unjustly crucified) went to Pilate and begged of him the body of our divine Redeemer, that they might lay it in the grave. He granted their request. According to the gospel of St. John, Nicodemus had gone in the night that Christ hung upon the cross, and with a knife removed the precious blood which was clotted about the wounds on the hands and feet of our divine Redeemer, put it into a glove, and preserved it with great veneration as long as he lived. But, aware that his dissolution was at hand, as he had no children, he acquainted his nephew, Isaac, with his secret, gave him the glove, with the inestimable treasure that it contained, and said : ' Here, take the blood of the true prophet, Jesus, whom our elders caused to be unjustly crucified ; preserve it with reverence, and pay to it the respect and the adoration which it deserves, and thou shalt never want for any thing.' Then Isaac took the precious treasure from the hand of his uncle, and put it into a strong coffer. He never omitted paying reverence to it every day, and he became rich and powerful. His wife asked him how he had acquired all this wealth in so short a time. He replied that it was a gift of God. Whereupon the wicked woman flew into a passion. But one day, when she found her husband on his knees before the coffer, she instantly went to the Jews, and told them that she had caught her husband worshipping an idol.

As Isaac had to endure much annoyance in consequence of this accusation, he resolved to leave the

city of Jerusalem, where he was not safe, and removed to the town of Sidon, on the sea coast. Some years afterwards, he had a vision that Titus and Vespasian, Roman emperors, should come with many legions to destroy Jerusalem ; so he made a leaden box, into which he put the precious blood of our divine Redeemer, and then he made a hole in a fig-tree which grew in his garden, and deposited therein his incomparable treasure. Some time afterwards he had a second vision, acquainting him that the Romans would destroy every thing with fire and sword, whereupon he resolved to cut down the fig-tree and to throw the trunk into the sea. It was not without sorrow that he executed this resolution ; but, in a third vision, he heard a voice, which said to him : ‘ Be of good cheer ; the precious blood which thou hast thrown into the sea shall land in a province of France, and be there adored by true Christians ! ’

“ Isaac, comforted and overjoyed, related his vision to his wife and to his neighbours, and gave them an account of this whole affair. The report of what we have here communicated spread throughout the whole territory of Jerusalem, and so far that we have often heard the narrative in our country ; and the Jews themselves, on account of the authority of Isaac and Nicodemus, being desirous to perpetuate the memory of so extraordinary a report, wrote it down in their annals in Hebrew letters.

“ In fact, the trunk of the fig-tree was carried to the vale of Fecamp, where it was found by the



children of a man named Boyo, who cut off a twig which had shot out of it, and carried it to their parents. As the latter had never seen this kind of wood, they asked the children where they had found that twig. They replied that they had found it in that part of the valley which abounded most in herbage, and that there were two others of the same sort there. Next day the father went with his children to fetch the two other branches, and he planted them in his garden, where great miracles took place.

“ Boyo tried several times to remove the trunk, but in vain. When this man died, his wife, named Mary, was left a widow with two children.

“ And at Christmas tide there came a pilgrim and begged for a night's lodging. Mary granted it, saying that she was poor, and could not make him so comfortable as she wished. The same evening, Mary said sorrowfully ; ‘ O my husband, if thou wert still living, I should have a billet to put upon the fire ! ’ Her afflicted children said to their mother : ‘ We have now one to help us, so we will try to-morrow to fetch home the fig-tree that lies in the valley.’ ‘ O, my children,’ she replied, ‘ you know that your father, with all his skill, never could do as much.’ The pilgrim, having made inquiries concerning the matter, said : ‘ We will go to-morrow morning with a car, and bring it hither, God willing.’ Next day they took a car, and lifted the trunk upon it without the least difficulty ; but, after they had gone a few paces, how great was their surprise to see the car break down on the spot where



the abbey of Fecamp now stands ! The pilgrim collected a heap of stones, and said : ‘ This trunk contains the precious blood of our divine Redeemer Jesus Christ. Here shall be erected the building that shall be dedicated to him to all eternity. Happy this province, for it contains the price of the redemption of the world ! ’ After he had said these words, he vanished.

“ When duke Anseguise and many nobles were hunting in this valley, and he commanded the dogs to be loosed, they saw a stag of astonishing size before them. After they had pursued him for a long time, he stood still on the spot where the trunk lay ; and after he had bowed his head toward those who pursued him, these were fixed motionless and deprived of the use of their limbs. The stag walked in a large circle round the spot where he had stood still and disappeared. When Anseguise had prayed fervently to God, they all recovered the use of their limbs. Anseguise, who had attentively watched the motion of the stag, caused a chapel to be built there, and resolved to erect a church in honour of the holy Trinity. But death overtook him before he could perform his vow.

“ St. Unaninque, governor of the country, under Lothaire or Clotaire, determined to fulfil the vow of his predecessor, caused the foundations of a church to be laid in honour of the holy Trinity, and erected an abbey there. He had the holy virgin St. Childemarche fetched from Bordeaux to be the first abbess.

“When the pagans had desolated this country and destroyed the abbey, the nuns, in order to prevent the barbarians from doing violence to their modesty, cut off their noses and lips, that they might inspire them with horror rather than desire.

“After the first duke of Normandy, named Roal, was dead, he was succeeded by duke William, called Longsword. This duke caused the abbey to be rebuilt. Several bishops, in their quality of ecclesiastics, and laymen, were invited to the consecration, and were present. And there came an unknown man of majestic appearance. He entered the church, picked up the precious blood, which had been left lying among the rubbish, and carried it to the high altar, in the presence of the whole assembly, saying:—‘Here is the price of the redemption of the world, that comes from Jerusalem: those who wear any thing that has been stained with the precious blood shall be protected from all misfortunes.’ Then the unknown person vanished, leaving the print of his foot in a stone which is still to be seen in the baptismal chapel.

“Since that time the precious blood has not ceased to enjoy the highest veneration on the part of all the faithful. The old traditions teach us how many miracles have here been wrought. A great number of pilgrims come hither every year, especially the inhabitants of Ivetot, who have for many years performed this pilgrimage, that commenced during a contagious disease, which raged in that town, but which has never since made its appearance.

“The procession of the precious blood is held every year on the Friday before Passion week in the interior of the abbey of Fecamp. It takes place also on the Monday of the holy Trinity, when the inhabitants of Ivetot and the whole adjacent country come to pay homage to it.

“Extract from a manuscript written in the year 1527.”

After this history of the precious blood, I need say very little concerning the church. The stone, with the foot-print of the unknown angel, is still to be seen. Great numbers of pilgrims actually come hither still on the days specified, and as the account says, most of the inhabitants of Ivetot and the surrounding country. Miracles too are still wrought, at least some that have but recently taken place are always related. Those who would assert that the age of miracles is past might convince themselves of the contrary here in Fecamp. At the shop where I bought the history of the precious blood, I was offered another little book, in which, at least half a hundred recoveries and conversions, wrought by a medal of the immaculate Virgin during the last six years, are enumerated and described. The book costs but six and the medal only two sous. It was printed in 1837. How much the book produces for its author, and the medal for the inventor, I know not: but the precious blood is invaluable to Fecamp; for the inhabitants, innkeepers, tradesmen, and the church, make a profit by it one year with another of not less than some hundred thousands of francs.



One thing surprised me. The book makes no mention of a spring which derives, or is said to derive, its name, its celebrity, and its medicinal property from the precious blood. Each of the pilgrims buys at least one bottle of the water, which enables them to dispense with the phials of the apothecary. On inquiring about this spring, I learned that it belongs to a private person, who lets it, and that it still produces a yearly income of several thousand francs at two sous per bottle. It is no doubt because it belongs to a private individual, that the priest who wrote that history takes care not to mention it. But perhaps there may be another reason for the omission. At times, especially in hot weather, the spring is far from copious. Now the owner of it is an homœopath, and asserts that one drop of the sacred fluid in a hogshead of river water is but the more efficacious; and therefore he never hesitates, when the spring is low and the demand great, to dilute its produce with a few hogsheads of ordinary water. The priest who wrote the book may belong to the old school of the alloiopaths, the puritans who deem it a sin for christian innkeepers to baptize their wine; and perhaps it was on this account that he has not noticed the spring. And who can blame him?

The name of Fecamp, as derived from Ficicampus, is thus supposed to owe its origin to the fig-tree. It is remarkable that, in several places in Normandy, as for instance at Tancarville, we meet with names which seem to indicate, that fig-trees



formerly existed there. Could the almighty Romans have so far conquered Nature in Normandy, as to make that province, which now produces nothing but apples, yield figs in ancient times? It is only in reference to this derivation that the abbey of Fecamp has any historical import. The monks formerly lived here in tolerable quiet, and history has very little to say concerning their abbots, which is a good sign. One of them was a member of the tribunal which condemned the Maid of Orleans to death. Casimir, king of Poland, here rested from the pleasures and pains of royalty. Another abbot, Aychard I., was unanimously elected, and the monks stated in their Chronicle that he was pointed out by the Holy Ghost: and this I can readily believe, for, after his election, the Chronicle says nothing more about him, but that he increased each monk's allowance of wine by one-third. He *was* a pious man.

Abbot William II. (who died in 1107) instituted a donation of half a pound of bread for every one who should apply for it at the gate of the abbey. This charity was continued till the dissolution of the abbey, and then amounted to twelve hundred pounds of bread per day, which was a yearly expence of ten thousand francs. It could well afford this donation, for the annual revenue of the house amounted to several hundred thousand francs. It gave away half or one-third of what it received in tithes. There were converts of this kind in almost every village in Normandy, and all were nearly as chari-

table. As in Spain, the people were reduced by them to beggary, and then they grew benevolent, and doled out alms to them. That is the secret. Far better had they, like the Russian grandees, offered the knout to the starving wretches. At any rate, had this been done, all Normandy would not, even at this day, be burdened with beggar-colonies, which certainly owe their origin to that period. It always takes centuries to exterminate the last roots, the last consequences, of a vicious system.

Mons. F., who had accompanied me to the church, conducted me from it to the garden of a private gentleman behind the town-house, containing the ruins of an ancient castle. He told me a great deal about this castle and about the dukes of Normandy, who are said to have resided there. Upon the whole, I am no friend to ruins, unless when by way of contrast they impart a new charm to a lovely landscape, or possess a living historical import, that is to say, confirm some everlasting maxim of history. It is interesting enough to know that duke Ypsilon was born, dwelt, or died here, but I must confess that it interests me no more than to be told that the wife of the duke's meanest serving-man produced a child in this place.

I took a walk to the pier: the sea ran high. On the right of the pier, scarcely ten paces from it, the waves washed the foot of the perpendicular cliff, and blocks as high as a man, which lay scattered around, attested the power of the billows that had rent them from their places. These rocks once witnessed an

achievement which is scarcely paralleled in history for its incredible boldness.

The inhabitants of Fecamp had espoused the cause of the League: they built on the top of the cliff a strong castle, into which M. de Villars, commandant of Rouen, retired with his troops. Boisrosé, an adherent of the royal party, resolved to make himself master of the fortress. But it was so guarded on all sides that a surprise was out of the question, except on the side next to the sea, and there a steep precipice of several hundred feet, which could not be approached at flood-tide, rendered any attempt next to impossible. It was on this side, nevertheless, that Boisrosé resolved to ascend to the fortress. Two soldiers devoted to his interest contrived to get admitted among the troops of Villars. One dark, stormy night, Boisrosé proceeded with fifty men in two boats to the foot of the cliff. Having reached the spot, the two soldiers, at a given signal, let down a rope from above, to which Boisrosé attached a cable provided with knots; this the two soldiers hauled up and fastened to the parapet. Two sergeants climbed up first, then the other soldiers, and lastly Boisrosé, having first pushed off the two boats from the shore, and rendered retreat impossible. In this manner the bold assailants had ascended two-thirds of the way, when their progress was suddenly interrupted, and tidings reached Boisrosé, that the first sergeant had lost his courage and presence of mind. To return was impracticable. Boisrosé clambered up from shoulder to shoulder



over his companions till he reached the sergeant, and, pointing his sword to his breast, forced him to proceed. Thus the little troop at length reached the top. The sentries were despatched, and the rest of the garrison made prisoners.

The man who looks at this steep rock must have no nerves if he can think of this deed without shuddering; and, with all my respect for popular tradition, I should have placed it in the class of legends, had it not been recorded in contemporary historical documents. As it is, one can but bow in admiration before the spirit, the courage, and the resolution, which make even impossibilities possible.

During my stay in Fecamp, I generally spent the evening at a sort of casino. On the first evening, I felt quite comfortable. It did me good to see all the company so earnestly pursuing their unmeaning diversions, a party at whist or domino, or enjoying the decisive crisis of a general game at bowls. The next day, I was more indifferent; on the third, I was a prey to *ennui*, and on the fourth, I conceived such a secret horror of this cruel monotony that, in spite of my promise, I could not prevail on myself to cross the threshold. For three evenings running, the same persons, the same faces, the same jokes, the same gravity: here the four old gentlemen at whist; there the fat rich baker and the starved apothecary at domino, the two mute piquet players at the same table as yesterday and the day before yesterday — who could endure this for a week, for a life, every day of the three hundred and sixty-five days in every year!



On the third evening, a ballot afforded me some relief. This was an event, a public affair. The candidate's name was proclaimed ; and the names of those by whom he was proposed were mentioned. It was then asked who had any thing to object against him. Not a voice was raised, but all present assumed a grave and important look. I took this at first for a good omen, but I was egregiously mistaken. It was a signal failure. An acquaintance explained the enigma, and told me that the candidate was not fit for the society, which consisted of the most respectable heads of families of the middle class ; whereas he belonged in reality to the common people. Thus I learned that, besides the middle class and the common people, there is also an aristocracy at Fecamp, which keeps itself as far aloof from the respectable middle class as that does from the people. It is curious to see the spirit of caste, scared from the capital by the paving-stones, sneaking for refuge to such obscure corners as these.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Pedestrian Excursion — Criquebeuf — Church-Service — Yport — Trip to Etretat — Remarkable Scenery — Inn frequented by Parisian Artists—Alphonse Carr; obligations owing him by the Inhabitants of Etretat— Morning Walk—A Messe d'Equipage —Hymn sung at it—Baptismal Ceremonies—Customs at Weddings—Funerals and Mourning—Baptism of Fishing Vessels—Joint Feasts of the Fishermen—Popular Traditions—History of Romain Bizon — Vestiges of Roman Works discovered at Etretat.

I LEFT Fecamp on a Sunday. The most delightful weather favoured my pedestrian excursion. I was pleased with the country, and with the views of the sea, of Fecamp, and its harbour, which I obtained on the eminence behind the town. But above all I was edified by the quiet and repose of the sabbath. The deepest silence prevailed all around, and scarcely a creature was to be seen abroad. Happy mortals, who have a Sunday at least once in seven days ! In Paris, out of seventy persons, one has Sunday every day, while the rest have from year's end to year's end three hundred and sixty-five working days, with a St. Monday now and then among them.

I had so arranged it as to arrive at Criquebeuf about service time, that I might have an opportunity of seeing the fishermen of Yport, who come thither to church. In the church itself I observed nothing indicative of the least poetic taste. It was low, whitewashed, and had a boarded ceiling. When I entered the church, many of the benches were still empty, and I seated myself without ceremony on one of the hindmost : but an old man presently entered and desired me to rise, which I did, conceiving that it was the custom here for the younger to give way to their seniors. I then took my place on another bench, and was not so ready to relinquish it, when, in a few minutes, a sturdy, square-built peasant desired me in no very civil terms to give it up to him. On my refusal, he told me that it belonged to him ; and, of course, I had no inclination to dispute his right of possession. To this second bench there was a kind of slide, which an old woman drew out and offered me. At first I was unwilling to accept it, but she insisted, and as she appeared to be poor, I concluded that she expected a trifle for the accommodation : I therefore took the seat, intending to give her something after the service.

The church was at length crammed, and mass commenced. A solemn silence prevailed. The singing then began. Heaven knows why it has denied the French all taste and feeling for sacred music. They are in other respects a richly gifted people, but the most lamentable singers in the world. I was here annoyed more particularly by one of my

neighbours on the bench before me. His voice was heard above that of the whole congregation ; and to show, I suppose, that he needed no prompter, he sang quicker than all the rest, so as to be always a bar before them, and when he had done he would look round triumphantly at the laggards and at me. And then the roaring of the *serpent* ! I should have liked to bruise its head.

Wishing, however, to see the end, I determined to hold out. The singing became by degrees less loud : some women near me, who had annoyed me sadly, ceased to be heard at all ; and when I looked round to discover the cause of the silence, I perceived that they had quietly fallen asleep in the Lord. They did not wake till the transubstantiation. My attention being thus called to the matter, I counted among twenty pious Christians on the three benches nearest to me no fewer than twelve of both sexes who were taking a comfortable nap.

The *Suisse*, an official resembling the beadle in English churches, with a Bonaparte hat, the halbert of a Landsknecht, and the bandoleer of a Trabant — thus borrowing his equipments from different countries and different ages — was entertaining enough, when, with proud look stamping the floor with the shaft of his halbert, he strutted before the priest as he sprinkled the church with holy water, or preceded the female notables collecting contributions for the mother of God and the heart of Jesus. The majority of the congregation changed their sous for two liards, that they might divide the sum fairly between the two claimants.



Upon the whole, the service was just the same as it is in all French villages, and I was glad enough when it was over. I then looked about for my old woman, whose debtor I considered myself. But she was already gone, and then I perceived that she had behaved more generously to me than I imagined. God bless her for it ! my walk had rather tired me. But, who knows ; perhaps she took me for the nephew of Monsieur le Maire, or some such high functionary. I walked with the fishermen to Yport. On leaving Criquebeuf, the road soon leads down hill, and the little fishing village, on a narrow creek, surrounded by rocks, then appears before you. The poetry which here prevails in Nature made amends for the prose that I had met with at church. The silent, tranquil village, and before it the young fishing-smacks on the beach, and beside these the old invalid barks covered with straw roofs and serving as huts, then the steep rugged rocks confining the prospect on one side, while on the other it extended over the sea further than the eye could reach, formed a beautiful and interesting picture.

Sunday, the sabbath, which the pious fishermen keep holy, deprived me of all the fine sights which I might have otherwise witnessed, when man and wife jointly launch their boats into the sea, or haul them up on the sand. The Sunday paraphernalia, mostly exhibiting some touches of the fashion of the day, deprived me also of the sight of the characteristic costumes which had been promised me. I consoled myself with the idea that my curiosity would

be gratified on the morrow. At length, that inexorable tyrant of man, the stomach, obliged me to seek a public-house. There I found a plain, wholesome dinner, and better cider than I had ever drunk in my life. Hitherto it had always excited my pity or my irony, when I heard Normans speaking of their cider with a sort of enthusiasm. Now, I cheerfully forgive them this sin ; for here I found that the juice of the apple is an excellent and refreshing beverage.

My host dined with me, and we were soon joined by some other guests. The landlord spoke French, but the others a gibberish of which I could only catch a word here and there, when it was pronounced slowly. On the other hand, the landlord himself did not always understand me. He told me that the inhabitants of Yport would be glad to have a church of their own, as it was inconvenient to have to go half a league every Sunday to hear mass. He seemed to have some special reasons of his own, for he added that the walk to Criquebeuf to church took out of the village a good deal of money, which the young fellows spend in the public-houses there. The spirit of joint stock companies has penetrated even to Yport ; for the principal inhabitants of the village had formed a plan of building a church by subscription for shares. I told him the story of the church at Maison rouge, near Paris, which the Lord created out of nothing, because those who undertook to build it brought the materials and acted the part of masons and bricklayers themselves. I will

not pledge myself that, before the end of a year, the people of Yport will not have wrought a similar miracle; for all present listened most attentively while I was relating the circumstance.

After dinner, I asked mine host if he could let me have a bed, but he referred me to another public house. On my arrival there, I was recommended to a third, and from that back to the second, where, out of kindness, they offered to make up a straw bed for me. This was an unlooked-for disappointment. It was already four o'clock, and I had no time for hesitation. Either to sleep upon straw, or to return to Fecamp, was an awkward dilemma. I soon made up my mind, and started for the place from which I had come. The weather changed by the way, and I thought myself lucky in reaching the first houses in Fecamp, before a heavy shower of rain began to fall.

Next day I rode to Etretat—yes, rode. I went to a man at Fecamp, who keeps carriages for hire, and inquired the price of a cabriolet to Etretat; but, as I thought it too high, he told me that there was an opportunity for going thither, of which I might avail myself. This opportunity was a *char-à-banc*, with two old women, a shopkeeper of Fecamp, and an old bachelor of Paris, who was born in Fecamp, and going to see his family. The carriage had no spring, and we were so jolted that I thanked Heaven whenever it went at a foot-pace, which was mostly the case, so that we were five hours going four leagues.



About three o'clock we reached the mill, on the top of the hill that descends to Etretat. Here our vehicle stopped, as it is scarcely possible for carriage and horses to proceed to the village. Just beyond the mill, the road declines rapidly to the valley, and affords a prospect equally beautiful and sublime. I let my companions go on by themselves, and sat down on a heap of stones to enjoy the view.

Before me opened a luxuriant valley, dividing at the further end into two branches: on the right, nearer to me, was another valley, solemn and tranquil. At the extremity of these valleys lies Etretat, its foot bathed by the sea. Close to the village, on the left, the rocks rise to a prodigious height; and it is not their ruggedness and wildness alone that impart to these an infinite charm. As Nature shapes giant animals and buildings in the clouds, so has she displayed in these rocks her fancy and her creative power. In those to the left of the village, she has hewn an archway, through which a ship might pass in full sail, and sculptured pillars, as though the whole were but the ruin of some colossal edifice, in comparison with which the largest houses of the village are but like mole-hills.

If ever I felt the poverty of language, it was here. I had sat a full hour, before I resolved to go down to the village, and when I had walked through it and cleared the houses, and found on the right side of Etretat a repetition of the gigantic pillars and ruins, and among them a second arch, I would fain have invented new words for these wonders, all was so different and so new.



As the sea did not permit me to contemplate these arches from below, I felt a strong desire to examine those works of Nature from above. Not till then was I aware of their awful grandeur. In particular places, the peaked rocks to the right and left of us shoot up high into the air; in others, yawning gulphs open at our feet; out of which the agitated sea sends up tones like the voice of a bard singing the destruction of his race. And before us, in the sea, towers the Aiguille, a pyramid tall as a hill. For ages the sea has been silently mining its foot, or battering it with its foaming billows, but without making any impression. Fifty paces further is a semicircular recess, which may have served for the orchestra of the chapel belonging to this castle of some giant race. The roof has fallen in, but the pillars are still standing. This is a temple of God, built by God himself.

My heart was too full. I could not stay long above, and was obliged to descend, to recover myself. On considering these marvels from below, we are filled with astonishment; but they elevate us—they lift us up. Above, on the contrary, we are filled with awe. Below, we feel apprehensive of the fall of those masses, but above we are seized with a giddiness, which stuns and annihilates, and deprives us of the power of being afraid.

On returning to human society, the gigantic spirits which had haunted my imagination gradually left me, and I became more composed. But it was not till the sun had set, and darkness de-

scended upon rocks and sea, that I was aware that since morning I had taken no refreshment.

The village is small, and inhabited exclusively by fishermen. When I was told at the mill on the top of the hill, that it is scarcely possible for a carriage to go the whole way from Fecamp to Etretat, I began to be afraid lest I might fare here, in regard to a lodging, as I had done at Yport. I was therefore agreeably surprised, when I found at the inn *au Rendezvous des Artistes*, kept by M. Blanquet, a good supper, a handsome room, and a clean comfortable bed. The house has not its name for nothing. Numbers of artists are continually visiting Etretat, and they mostly take up their quarters here. During the bathing season, a little colony always retires hither, to enjoy the beauties of Nature, and to recruit after the dissipations of Paris. This may be done at a very cheap rate: a room, breakfast, dinner, and supper, cost altogether three francs fifty centimes, or less than three shillings English.

You find here, moreover, a sort of library composed of the novels of Alphonse Carr. This writer has made Etretat his laboratory, and introduced it wholesale into one of his works, "*Le Chemin le plus court*." Etretat owes him much, for he has directed attention to the beauties of the country, so that it is become the fashion for the writers and artists of Paris to come on pilgrimage hither. Though I am no friend to the distortions of Alphonse Carr, yet I forgive him them, since I

have seen Etretat, and know how many Parisians' hearts he has opened, by placing himself in their way and directing them to this place. The inhabitants of Etretat are thankful enough for this service, and are fond of talking about Monsieur Alphonse. Monsieur César, the landlord's son, when he heard that I knew Monsieur Alphonse, talked the whole evening about nothing else; and he, in particular, has a right to rate him very high; for Monsieur César has not only gained money by the visits of Parisians, but a kind of polish from his intercourse with them, which renders his conversation extremely agreeable.

From my room I had a view of the sea and the rocks, which, lighted by the moon, presented a new scene. The shadows of the rocks were mirrored in the sea, and the sea sported with them, giving them life by its own motion. The most solemn silence reigned around; not a creature was stirring in the village or on the shore. The sea, too, was calm; not a breeze ruffled its surface. The roaring of the surf alone, like distant thunder, told of the possibility of a storm.

How long I stood at the window, absorbed in silent awe and adoration, I cannot tell. At length I went to bed. The voice of the breakers was my lullaby.

I awoke next morning before sunrise. I could not resist the desire to examine the rocks on the right from above. When I left the house, a light transparent fog covered the village; but, by the



time I was half-way up the hill, I found myself above it, and then enjoyed the most delicious morning view. A stream of mist-clouds lay upon the valleys which here united themselves, and, passing over the houses of the village, poured itself into the sea. The sun, which was just rising, tinged these vapours while moving off from the land below me. Here and there they were less dense, and then I caught a glimpse of a house or a tree illumined by the sun. And on the azure sea, into which this stream of fog descended, the boats of the fishermen going out to their occupation appeared one after another emerging from the vapour, first the tops of the masts, then the sails, and at last the hulls and the fishermen. At least twenty of them became in this manner gradually visible, standing out to sea.

I walked a good distance along the cliff, till I came to a place where the rock extends further into the sea than elsewhere, and affords a view on both sides. Here a custom-house post is established, and one might envy the keeper, if the tempest did not at times assert its right, and rage so furiously that at every step you are in danger of being blown away and hurled into the abyss. From this spot a footpath leads down to the strand. It made me dizzy as I stood above and looked down this path; but aged persons and children clamber up and skip down it. The two arched rocks, on the right and left of Etretat, Cape Antifer, and the cliff from Fecamp, may be seen from this place.



I had been told that at eight o'clock this morning a *messe d'equipage* would be performed. At certain seasons of the year, the fishermen of Etretat repair to Dieppe and Fecamp, in order to sail from those places on the herring and mackarel fishery. Before the departure of each vessel, the crew cause a solemn mass to be read, that they may, by means of it, be preserved from mishap and successful in their fishery. Such a mass I was desirous to attend.

When I reached the church, which is a good step from the village, and built partly in the Gothic, partly in the Byzantine style, the mass had already begun. All the men belonging to the vessel for which the mass was said were assembled in a side chapel, with their wives and children, their fathers and mothers. They prayed in silent devotion, and sang with a sort of wild fervour, which produced an effect, though their singing was neither pleasing nor even solemn. But at the end of the mass, they sang a hymn, which, in its simplicity, seemed better suited to them, and in which men, women, and children, all joined kneeling. This hymn, though I could not catch the words, made a deeper impression upon me than all that had gone before, which seemed to me to be mere matter of form. On inquiring afterwards concerning it, I learned that it is peculiar to the fishermen of Etretat, and that it is always sung at the departure of a vessel. An acquaintance of mine procured me a copy of it.

## A MESSE D'EQUIPAGE.

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Le matin, quand je me reveille,  
Je vois mon Jesus venir  
Il est beau à merveille  
C'est lui qui me reveille,  
C'est Jesus !  
C'est Jesus !  
Mon aimable Jesus !

Je le vois, mon Jesus, je le vois  
Porter sa brillante croix  
Là haut sur cette montagne,  
Sa mère l'accompagne,  
C'est Jesus !  
C'est Jesus !  
Mon aimable Jesus !

Ses pieds, ses mains, sont clouées,  
Et son chef est couronné  
Des grosses epines blanches ;  
Grand Dieu ! quelle souffrance !  
C'est Jesus !  
C'est Jesus !  
Mon aimable Jesus !

A l'autel du saint sacrement  
Jesus fait son aliment,  
Dedans la sainte hostie  
Mon Jesus est en vie.  
C'est Jesus !  
C'est Jesus !  
Mon aimable Jesus !

L'église est sa garnison  
Et sa maison d'oraison,  
Les anges en sont la garde  
Que dieu nous sauve et garde.  
C'est Jesus !  
C'est Jesus !  
Mon aimable Jesus !

If this hymn possesses no particular poetic beauty, it is the more childlike and simple. How old it is I can not tell, but the rhyme *blanche* and *souffrance*, here pronounced *souffranche*, proves it to be of Norman origin. It is sung before the departure of every ship and in every storm; and the faith that saves has certainly imparted by means of this hymn new strength and confidence, rescued many a fishing-boat from destruction, and given back many a father to his children, many a lover to his sweetheart.

Of the intelligent shoemaker who procured me this hymn, I made inquiry concerning the manners and customs of the country. It is only persons of the lower class who can furnish such information, but not all of them; unless a man has seen other countries and other customs, he has no point of comparison; things of importance appear to him not worth notice, and vice versa. I had applied to the right person.

Whoever would learn to know the people must observe them at the three epochs of life, birth, marriage, and death.

The ceremonies of baptism are of little importance at Etretat. The women only assemble, originally no doubt rather to congratulate the lying-in woman, and to assist her in any way they can. Hence has arisen a sort of treat, at which cakes and cider are handed about. The men are too busy to pay much attention to the new citizen of the world: nor do they set much value upon him, till

he is strong enough to go to sea with them, and to defy its storms and its dangers.

The customs at weddings are of more consequence. Love still makes matches here. The fishermen are nearly all alike rich or poor, whichever you please; and, owing to this equality, all those intrigues, that traffic in human beings, which so frequently interfere in other places between two hearts, are here unknown. Hence those only find who seek each other, and hence too arise happy marriages, to which an unhappy one is an almost unknown exception at Etretat.

Matches are usually concluded at the time of confirmation. The boys and girls go together to receive the preliminary religious instruction, and there most of them form connexions which nothing but death can afterwards dissolve. At first the young people see and speak to each other but seldom; and that secretly, in sequestered walks. They are often themselves not aware of the nature of their attachment, till the railleries of their friends of both sexes, who are a few years older, explain the riddle and open their eyes. The consciousness of their mutual love only serves to knit the bond more closely, and as there is not a creature to oppose their inclination, they make no scruple to acknowledge it. From this moment there is not a leisure hour, not a holiday, but they spend it together. The periodical absences of the lover, the dangers which he encounters during them, strengthen their attachment; and the lover has soon obtained all that his mistress has



to bestow. If this intercourse is likely to produce fruit, the wedding-day is fixed. No instance is known of a young fellow having deserted his pregnant mistress; and the few exceptions which have occurred during the last fifty years, when a lad has married his lass before she exhibited evidence of her fertility, can easily be enumerated. Marriages thus contracted are richly blest with offspring: twelve, sixteen children are not unusual, and my informant assured me that children here thrive *comme le fumier*.

When God has thus given his blessing to the future union, the lovers declare themselves engaged, and the day for the wedding is fixed; but a sort of solemn betrothal previously takes place. This is called *l'embaguement*. To this end, the bridegroom with his parents, and the bride with her's, her sisters, and her most intimate friends, go to Fecamp or Dieppe, where the bridegroom buys for the bride a gold chain, frequently a watch, and a prayer-book, and silver rings for her sisters and female friends. The poorest fisherman does not omit this ceremony; the only difference is that the presents are more or less costly, according as he is more or less wealthy.

The wedding-day at length arrives. All the friends of both parties are invited to the solemnity. Those of the bride meet at her father's, and those of the bridegroom at his; and thence they proceed in two trains, the bride taking the arm of her father, and the bridegroom his mother's, to the church. The priest gives the benediction. From this mo-

ment the two families consider themselves as related, and, as a sign of this relationship, the two companies, which have hitherto kept separate, mingle together. The father of the bridegroom steps up to the bride and says to her : *Levez-vous, ma fille*, and her mother takes the arm of the young husband. An entertainment, at which cider flows in streams, follows the ceremony. Among the wealthier fishermen, the young husband pays the expence of it. But even the poor here have a right to enjoy themselves; and, in this case, all the friends and relatives club together to furnish what the bridegroom's resources cannot supply.

The fisherman of Etretat confronts death every day, and learns to look him fearlessly in the face. Every corpse, after the head has been covered with a napkin, called *sweers* (from *sueur*, *sudarium*), a clean shirt put on it, and it has been sewed up in a sheet, is placed upon the threshold of the house-door, with the feet reaching into the street, and there exposed, frequently for twenty-four hours, till the priest comes to fetch it. Around the corpse is formed a sort of chapel with sheets and linen cloths; before it stands a vessel with holy water, in which a palm-branch is left lying. This branch, which has been blessed on Palm Sunday, is kept for this express purpose the whole year, and annually renewed. If the deceased is an elderly man or woman, he or she is carried to the church by the *Frères de Charité*. Three tolls of the bell, *l'appelle des frères*, announce their arrival to the whole

village, upon which all the friends and relatives, male and female, the latter in long black mourning habiliments, meet and in solemn silence accompany the corpse to its last home. The playmates of the deceased, if a child from ten to sixteen years old, carry the corpse to the churchyard, the girls being dressed in white; if older than sixteen, the nearest friends undertake the office, only in that case the girls are in black. The reason for this difference of dress is partly the same as that for not making any particular ceremony at the time of baptism, and partly the christian notion that innocent children belong by right to Heaven.

The mourning of a wife for her husband, of children for their parents, lasts two years, and in this mourning the whole house and almost every thing in it participate. The kitchen utensils constitute the wealth and the pride of the fishermen's wives, and during the period of mourning, these, with the exception only of just what they want for daily use, are shut up, and not brought out and put in their places again till the two years are expired.

Warm feeling and deep earnestness are the character of these solemnities, and we meet with them in other ceremonies peculiar to the fishermen. If these take less concern in the baptism of their children than fathers in general do, they manifest the deeper interest in the baptism of their vessels.

Whenever a new-born bark is ready to be launched into its proper element, the friends of the father, as well as the men who are to compose her



crew, assemble to attend the baptism of the new citizen of the sea. The priest comes with the sexton, and pronounces his blessing over the vessel and gives her a name. This ceremony is never omitted, for not a fisherman of Etretat would venture to sea in an unbaptized heathen bark. During the christening itself, the men look on in silent devotion, or, when it is over, perform their part by singing the hymn which has been already quoted. After the ceremony they have an entertainment, towards which they all contribute.

Among the men of each smack there is a sort of relationship, a sort of community of property. As they share all dangers, so they honestly share the produce of their toil, and likewise the pleasures of life. Every Saturday the booty of the week is divided, and then they have, at the joint expense, a sort of regale, usually consisting of fish and eggs, with plenty of cider. The utmost hilarity prevails at these weekly festivities, which are here termed *faire la caudré*—in other places *faire la chaudière*. This feeling of relationship extends even beyond life: as at Pollet, after the decease of a fisherman, his widow and orphans have a right to send out their nets with the vessel to which he belonged, and receive their share of what is caught. Though the most unrestrained mirth and gaiety sometimes reign among the fishermen of this place, yet a certain reserve, a certain gravity, scarcely ever leave them. They are rarely seen to dance, and when they do, the dance is nothing but a *rondé*, to which one of the party sings a song.



These ceremonies, these customs, seem to me to furnish evidence of the poetic character of the people. These solemn funeral processions, the christening of vessels, the joint feasts of men knit together into one family by participation in storms and dangers, indicate deep sensibility; and this could not fail to be affected by the grandeur of that Nature which surrounds the seaman wherever he goes. The traditions of the people animated it, and gave rise to tales and stories, some of which are preserved to this day.

On the top of the cliff, to the left of the village, three pointed rocks are seen shooting up towards heaven. Between them is a kind of platform; and from this dizzy elevation, you overlook the village and the fishing smacks, if you are bold enough to climb up to it by a path scarcely a foot wide, with a yawning abyss on either side. This is called the *Chambre des Demoiselles*, and the people relate the following story concerning it. In those times when the knights were the lords of the country, the village of Etretat belonged to the *chevaliers de Frefosé*. One of these knights was a libertine, and all the females were obliged to minister to his pleasure. There lived in Etretat three sisters, the pride of the village for beauty and virtue. One Sunday, the knight saw them at church. After mass was over, they were returning home, when the servants of the knight fell upon them, and conducted them to his castle at Filleville. Hitherto no woman had dared to oppose his commands and desires; but with the

three sisters threats and persuasions were alike unavailing. His love was changed into bitter hatred, and he resolved to take a signal revenge upon them. He ordered them to be taken to the above-mentioned platform, and there thrown into a large cask driven full of spikes, which his servants rolled into the abyss.

From that time the spirits of the three victims were seen every night on the spot where they were put into the cask. The fisherman, when approaching from a distance, beheld the white spectral figures, and made the sign of the cross, and when he came nearer, he heard them singing just as they had done before their cruel execution. They never harmed any one. But whenever the chevalier de Frefosé would have gone abroad to entertainments or to the chase, the three sisters would sally from their rocky chamber, and with their frightful figures drive him back to his castle. Thenceforward he had neither rest nor peace; wherever he went, the spectres followed him, so that the incessant terror in which they kept him produced a lingering disease that put an end to his life; and then the three sisters, having accomplished the work of vengeance which they were charged to perform, likewise found repose.

Near the foot of the rock, which bounds the view on the right of Etretat, is seen protruding at ebb-tide a prodigious block, called La Roche St. Olive. It is said that, when the water is deep, there is a spring in this rock; and the popular poetry has,

by means of a tradition, imparted to it a more living import.

One day, a pious woman, named Olive, was washing clothes at this spring. This was in the times when the pagans began to make incursions in France. Olive had not observed that several barks were approaching, and, when she at length looked up, she found herself surrounded by Saracens—so says popular tradition, which here invariably transforms the northern pirates into Saracens. Nothing but a miracle could save her; and she prayed to God for one, vowing at the same time to build a church if he granted her prayer. And God did grant it, and raised a storm which drove the vessels of the Saracens out to sea again. So St. Olive built the church which we still see here. But the devil would not suffer it to remain in the village, and so he removed it to the distance of several hundred paces, to the foot of the hill, where it now stands.

There is another story connected with the disappearance of a rivulet, which once watered the valley, a fact of which there exists historical evidence. At ebb-tide, you see at the beach a number of springs, which altogether might form a stream ten or twelve feet wide. The purest, clearest, freshest water gushes from them, mingling at flood-tide immediately with the sea, and at ebb terminating its course at the distance of about ten paces. Whenever these springs are left uncovered by the tide, fifty, and frequently a hundred, females of all ages



repair to them to wash their clothes. Their tongues go at a greater rate than their wash-beetles. These springs are the court where a jury of females, old and young, is impannelled for the trial of all offences against good morals, and neither the most trivial circumstance, nor the profoundest secret, escapes their penetration. If, which is very rare, a family quarrel, or any other, occurs at Etretat, the egg of discord is sure to have been hatched at these springs.

But I must not forget the popular tradition. The river, which now runs under ground, formerly worked a large mill, near its source, at Graintville l'Alouette. One day, a gipsy woman came to the miller, and, ill and destitute as she was, begged a lodging of him : but the miller, a hard-hearted man, refused her petition with scorn and abuse. Filled with anger at this treatment, the poor creature said to him : " To-morrow morning thou shalt have thy reward." And in the night the miller heard the miserable woman before his house cursing him and repeating all sorts of magic incantations. Obedient spirits flew at her bidding on the wings of the tempest, and dug a subterranean bed for the river, and lo, when the miller rose in the morning, there was no river to be seen !

I have alluded elsewhere to the natural wonders which the fishermen occasionally witness. That cavern, in the cliff on the right, called *Le Trou à l'Homme*, relates to us a story of this kind. About fifty years ago, a storm drove a Swedish ship against the rocks of Etretat, and dashed her in



pieces. Help was out of the question, as certain destruction threatened any one who should have attempted to afford it. The tempest lasted for full twenty-four hours, and the sea had already cast up most of the bodies before it ceased, and the ebb-tide permitted the Trou à l'Homme to be examined. Upon a high ledge of rock in that cavern, a body was found and lifted down. The motion recalled the man, who was but apparently dead, to consciousness; and he related that, exhausted by his struggle with the waves, he had commended his soul to Heaven at the moment when his senses forsook him. A wave had then cast him upon the ledge, where the tempest seemed to have forgotten him.

It is not quite thirty years since another cavern in the cliff, called Le Trou à Romain Bizon, has had its history. Romain Bizon was a bold fisherman, who with undaunted courage defied the dangers of the sea. But the ever restless ambition of Napoleon required him to display his courage in another sphere, and Romain was marked out for the military service. He was to leave his boat, the sea, and his sweetheart and his poor old mother into the bargain. This was too much for him. On the day when his comrades, on whom the lot had likewise fallen, were marched off, he was the only one who did not answer to his name. Not a creature knew what had become of him. He had found a cleft in the rocks, half a league from Etretat, and made it his abode. Fastening a rope on the top of

the cliff, he had descended by it to the cavern. Letting down a second rope from his new dwelling, he ascended to the top of the cliff by the first for the purpose of removing it; and by means of the other, which reached to the beach, he went down every night about his business, to catch shell-fish among the rocks, and thus supported his mother, who, accompanied by his sweetheart, brought him bread, meat, and other necessaries.

In this manner he lived quietly in his cavern till winter. The cold then obliged him to make a fire at night, and this fire soon apprised the fishermen, who saw it out at sea, that some one must be living on that spot. During the Empire ghosts were extremely shy; half a century earlier, people would have crossed themselves and passed by without saying a word; but now, "Who can be living yonder?" was the first question of the fishermen to one another: and it was presently whispered that it was Romain Bizon. One communicated his conjecture to another, and ere long the strange story reached the ears of the authorities. These first tried by stratagem to draw the fugitive from his hiding-place. They sent their servants, disguised as fishermen, to call him in the night to come down from his hole. But Romain had agreed upon certain signals with his visitors, and when the gendarmes called him, not a creature stirred above. The magistrates at length determined to drive him from his retreat by force or fear. One morning, the mayor of Etretat assembled the whole of the

gendarmerie and the coast-gunners of the environs, and marched with them to capture Romain Bizon. When they were beneath his hiding-place, the mayor summoned him in the name of the law to descend, otherwise he would send up the gendarmes, or have him shot from below. The echo of the rocks was the only reply.

It was much easier to threaten than to perform. There was no way but up the almost perpendicular side of the towering cliff, and it so happened that the brave gendarmerie had no wings. The magistrate ordered the fortress to be attacked, and the whole armed force commenced a platoon-fire, directed against the cleft. The fire was kept up for some time; still all was quiet above, so that it was very doubtful whether the gallant assailants were not much in the same predicament as the far-famed Don Quixote, when he was fighting with windmills. At last, however, Romain seemed to lose his patience. In a terrible voice, he cried from his retreat, "Well, if it must be so, I will." The strokes of an axe resounded in the rock, and in a minute a huge fragment, hurled from the cavern, dispersed the armed force, and the mass of spectators—for the report of the musketry had drawn most of the inhabitants of Etretat to the spot—like chaff scattered by the wind, and drove some of them into the sea. The worthy magistrate was extended at full length on the beach, and narrowly escaped drowning. Stone after stone did the besieged now fling from his castle, so that not one of the brave warriors of the great emperor durst ap-



proach within the range of its formidable artillery. By and by the tide began to flow, and forced the imperial troops to bethink them of retreating. On the following day, the rope by which Romain Bizon had been accustomed to ascend and descend was seen swinging to and fro in the wind; and one bold fellow, having clambered up to his cavern, discovered that he was gone.

In the space of eight years many things may happen. The emperor was dethroned, the Bourbons returned, and peace reigned in France. One evening a stranger came to Etretat, and knocked at the door of a small cottage. When it was opened, Romain Bizon—for it was no other—inquired for *Mère Bizon*. The woman who opened the door coldly replied, "*La Mère Bizon*! why she has been dead these three years." He found his sweetheart again, but she was the wife of another, and the mother of two fine boys and a girl. Happy would it often be if the heart were softer, and would break sooner than the head! A few weeks afterwards the sea was seen playing with a shattered corse. Romain Bizon had thrown himself from the top of the cliff.

For most of these popular tales I am indebted to a very intelligent young man, the abbé Kochet, curate of the church of St François at Havre, who has moreover the merit of having ascertained, by researches on the spot, that there must once have been a Roman settlement of some consequence on the site now occupied by the insignificant fishing



village of Etretat. Traces of baths and aqueducts, at least, seem to prove as much. Relics of ancient masonry, buried beneath gravel, also attest that here were once strong dykes and hydraulic works of considerable importance. Lastly, in digging at the farthest point of the cliff, to the right of Etretat, were discovered the foundations of a castle, probably belonging to the middle ages.

I was sorry after a stay of a few days to be obliged to tear myself from all these beautiful, grand, and sublime scenes. I had promised to attend the wedding of one of my friends at Havre. It was not till the day when it was to take place that I could make up my mind to leave Etretat. Early in the morning I asked my landlord, who had frequently spoken of having occasionally lent his cabriolet and his horses to an artist from Paris, whether he could accommodate me with them for that day. The cabriolet was at my service, but the horses were *en roulage* in Paris. In all Etretat there was nothing of the kind to be procured, and if I meant to fulfil my promise, I must walk. I soon made up my mind, and must confess that I had no reason to repent ; for the country as far as Montivilliers well repays the trouble of walking the four leagues. At Montivilliers I took a seat in an omnibus for Havre. The bridegroom had addressed a letter to me at Dieppe, to inform me that the wedding would take place two days before it was intended : of course I arrived too late. My excursion commenced with a disappointment, and ended

with one—the ball at Dieppe, and the wedding at Havre. I thanked my Creator that the letter had not reached me, otherwise I should have been obliged to leave Etretat two days before I did, which would have been a much greater misfortune.

END OF VOL I

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# EXCURSIONS IN NORMANDY,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE  
CHARACTER, MANNERS, CUSTOMS,  
AND TRADITIONS OF THE PEOPLE;  
OF THE  
STATE OF SOCIETY IN GENERAL;  
AND OF THE  
HISTORY, ARTS, SCIENCES, COMMERCE, MANUFACTURES,  
ANTIQUITIES, SCENERY, &c.  
OF  
THAT INTERESTING PROVINCE OF FRANCE.

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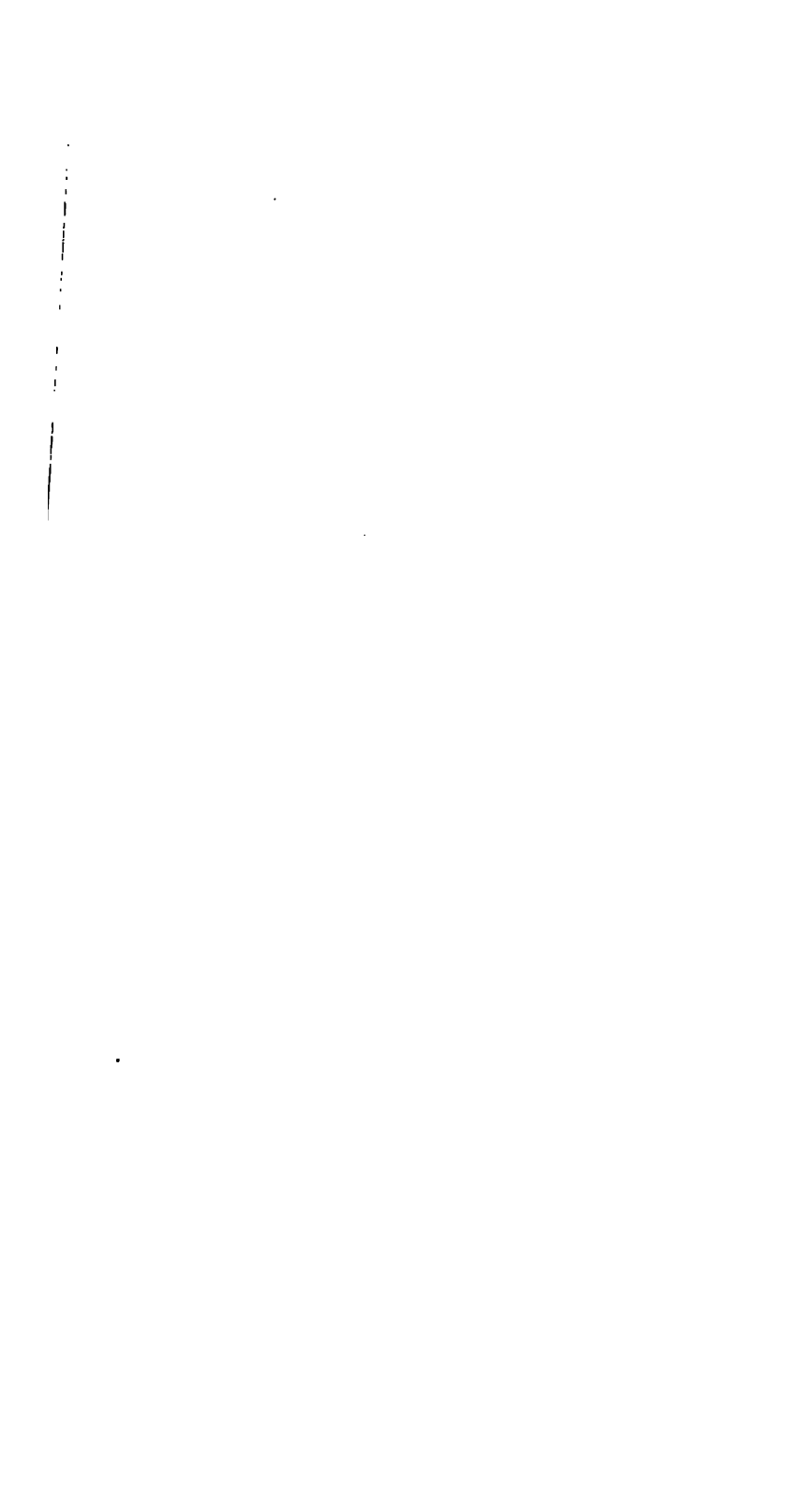
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EXCURSIONS  
IN  
N O R M A N D Y.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Voyage from Havre to Caen — Traditions of the Coast — History of the Country — William the Conqueror — Scene at his Interment — Historical Particulars of Caen — The Revolution — Charlotte Corday — Spirit of the People of Caen.

Two or three years ago, a voyage from Havre to Caen was something worth talking of. Wind and weather still asserted their ancient right, and could keep passengers at sea as long as they pleased, send a storm to overtake them, and thus give to the voyage a sufficient seasoning of terror, anxiety, and poetry. Steam has robbed the wind of its power; the trip from Havre to Caen is now made in the *Calvados* in a few hours: and you may reckon with certainty, if you leave Havre in fine weather, to have it equally fine till you reach the mouth of the Orne. But, if the weather turns out unfavourable, the



steamer and her passengers wait till the following day. She puts out just far enough to sea to prevent you, though without ever losing sight of land, from discerning any object upon it. I must confess that I prefer travelling by land, where every tree, every stone, the hut and the palace, the church and the prison, have their history, their poetry, and their lesson.

It is but here and there that the sea has a history to relate, and these spots are mostly within a short distance of the land, and their history is connected with the latter, as in the case of engulphed towns, and of sea-fights which could be viewed from the shore, and the stories of which are handed down from father to son. In the open sea, on the other hand, you pass over spots where the fate of kings and nations has been decided, while not a cross, not a church, not a weeping-willow, intimates that here the flower and the strength of a people have been sacrificed.

The coasts along which we passed have preserved the memory of a few such events, concerning which the sea, that most silent of graves, says not a syllable, and the old fishermen relate them to their sons when storms keep them at home. Most of these stories, however, turning as they do upon the decided superiority of the French in seamanship and valour to English antagonists, sound so very apocryphal, and are so far from flattering to British national pride, that the reader would not thank me to repeat them.

But these shores witness heroic deeds of a differ-

ent kind, deeds unattended with bloodshed, which are so frequent here as not to surprise any one; while the actors merely consider that they have done a good day's work, and the world hears nothing of the matter unless a stranger happens to be present, and, struck by the novelty of such daring and disinterested efforts, is induced to make it public.

Not long before I went to Havre, I read in the *Pilote de Calvados*, a paper which appears at Caen, the following article:—

“I arrived yesterday (March 11th) at Hermanville during a tremendous storm. Curious to observe the sea and its waves, I went early this morning to the beach, where a douanier presently pointed out to me two vessels tossed to and fro by the wind, and predicted that they must soon founder. This intimation made me shudder. I left the douanier and went to the mouth of the Orne, where, near the village of Ouistreham, are the houses of the pilots, and where the life-boats are kept. Two of these were then lying there, the *Neptune* and the *Amphitrite*, each of which has in general a crew of twenty men. The sea ran so tremendously high, that the *Neptune* refused to put off. Pierre Lefou-lon, called Mistain, master of the *Amphitrite*, went to his comrades. ‘My lads,’ said he, ‘yonder are two vessels in distress: which of you will go with me and risk his life to save them?’ No answer was returned to his question. ‘Quoi!’ he exclaimed, in two or three minutes, pointing to the vessels,

‘*quoi ! pas un bon garçon ! Allons ! allons ! qui me suit et qui nage ?*’ ‘*I,*’ hastily answered François Varnier. ‘*I,*’ said Marie Frevet. ‘*I, I,*’ at length, cried the two brothers, Severin and Napoleon Meisson. ‘*And I too,*’ said Jean Guilloin, whose name is not entered in the list of pilots, but who was ready to venture his life like the others. There were seven of them in all. And these seven, whom all the bystanders called foolhardy, threw themselves into a boat, and steered for the brig Edward, which was in the most imminent danger. Every eye followed them as they rowed off. One moment they disappeared between the waves, and the next they again rose above them. A hundred voices from the shore were raised to encourage them, and they were accompanied by our prayers. The wind was against them, they could not luff in the narrow bay ; and nothing but the adventurous spirit of Mistain, who resolved to steer his little bark over a sand-bank, which might have proved her destruction, rendered it possible to approach the brig. The waves lifted her thirty feet high, and tossed her like a nut-shell. Had sail, or rope, or helm, failed to perform its office, the boat must have gone to the bottom, and the two brigs into the bargain. At length, after incredible exertions, Mistain was seen clambering up the side of the brig, seizing the helm, and combating the tempest, till at last he steered the vessel into the river amidst the plaudits of the multitude.

“On board the brig there was a young woman,

who had tied her infant fast to her own body, and awaited death kneeling and praying at the foot of the mast. She was the wife of the captain. All the spectators had shuddered with her; all congratulated her on her deliverance; and they turned from her to hail the gallant Mistain, who calmly smiled at our applause and the expression of our admiration.

“The second brig was not saved till the following day, by Mistain also, at a moment when she made eleven feet water, and could not have lived many minutes. You should have seen the sea and its waves hurling the boat over the rocks, in order to form any idea of his courage. Shipwrecks are very frequent in these parts, and it is often the case that, while you turn your eyes another way, the vessel is gone for ever. But this was not the first enterprize of Mistain's. Whenever the wind howls and the storm rages, he is ready. And for the obscure seaman, for the noble Mistain, shall there not be a cross to perpetuate the remembrance of his intrepidity, and the glory of his self-denying devotedness?”

I beg the reader to bear in mind that in this narrative I am but the translator. In the cheerfulness with which Mistain, regardless of his own life, defies the tempest to save the lives of others; in the simple, energetic language by which he prevails on his “lads” to accompany him; in the composure which he displays after he has accomplished his work; we see the characteristics of the daring, deter-



mined pilot of Normandy : and in the way in which the reporter proposes to reward him, we discover Monsieur le Maire, or Conseillier de Prefecture, or some grocer or other of Caen, who wished for once to witness a tempest, and to earn the honour of obtaining for Mistain a recompence worthy of his merit. The French, and especially the good-natured bourgeoisie, are the veriest children in existence — a bit of red riband or the merest toy renders them supremely happy.

It was amidst such recollections that we entered the river with much less difficulty than the brig Edward.

So early as the time of the Romans, the coast of Calvados was called *Littus Saxonicum*, the Saxon shore, because Saxon pirates had conquered it and settled there in the third century. It is probable that the villages and towns of Ouistreham, Honfleur, Hermanville, &c. may owe their German names to those marauders.

For some time you ascend the river between grayish yellow rocks, which look very dreary, and are liable to give a bad opinion of the country. By degrees, however, the hills recede ; thriving villages, splendid country-houses, Norman-Gothic churches, and rich meadows, furnish proofs of the flourishing state of the country. The prospect becomes more and more extensive ; and at length Caen, with its numerous Gothic steeples, appears encompassed with smiling villages, orchards, meadows, and woods.

The Saxons were, in almost every instance, the

precursors of the Normans. Part of Lower Normandy, as we have seen, was named, so early as the third century, the Saxon shore ; and England is to this day called, in spite of the Normans, the Land of the Angles. Caen seems to have been founded by the Saxons. In a charter of Richard II., duke of Normandy, dated 1027, the town is named Cadhim ; and it is not improbable that, as several historical inquirers assert, Caen and Cadhim may be derived from the old Saxon word Cadhom, a place of war. But all such questions I leave for antiquaries to settle. Not that I set down these discussions as unimportant, but I gladly relinquish them to those who are accustomed to cut up the timbers with which a building may afterwards be constructed. It was not till a later period that the popular element — which is all that I have to do with — found now and then an historian to notice it when it occasionally raged like the sea in a tempest.

Favoured by its situation, a few leagues from the mouth of the Orne, amidst a fine country, Caen gradually grew up, through the activity of its citizens, into a considerable town ; so that William the Conqueror deemed it of sufficient consequence for him to reside there a considerable time, and to make it in some measure his capital ; and it thereby acquired fresh importance and increased extent.

William the Conqueror, the son of the bold Robert, and grandson by the mother's side of an humble tanner, was one of those happy natures which frequently seem to spring from mixed blood,

and which, by their courage, their valour, and their energy, furnish a proof of the good sense of that law, which prohibited marriage between relatives in times so ancient as scarcely to belong to history.

The first act of importance which ushered William the Conqueror upon the stage of history was the God's peace. At his instigation, the clergy decreed, at a council held at Caen, in 1042, that peace should prevail throughout the whole country from Wednesday evening till Monday morning; and whoever broke it was to be punished with banishment, excommunication, or the refusal of burial. William for a time rigidly enforced this law of peace, and the country flourished under him, and the people were happy. This first act of William the Conqueror's was aimed more especially at the nobles, and the grandson of the lowly tanner compelled them to respect a law of humanity.

Some years afterwards (1053) he proved that he could be equally independent, equally above the control of the clergy, when they presumed to interfere in his personal affairs or those of the country. Following the impulse of his heart, he resolved to marry Matilda of Flanders. The pope discovered an impediment in the near consanguinity of the parties and forbade the match. William defied the prohibition of the mightiest of the mighty, and regarded the anathemas launched at him from the Capitol by the head of Christendom no more than he had cared for the anger of his incensed nobles.

It was not long before he showed not less energy



in his treatment of the people, by enacting a law devised and adopted for their benefit. As in 1042 he had forced the God's peace upon the nobility, so in 1057 he put a curb upon the people, demoralised by long wars, by the absence of the sovereign, and by the insolence of the nobles, by means of the law of *Couvre-feu*, which required all the inhabitants of the country, on the ringing of a bell at night, to repair to their houses and to put out fire and light. If such a law was necessary, this is of itself a sufficient proof how savage the people must have become, since it was requisite to impose unnatural fetters upon all for the general protection; but it showed also the energy and resolution of him who could undertake to enact and enforce such a law, and to strike at the root of the evil.

With the same boldness then had William, when necessity demanded or only opportunity offered, set at defiance the nobility, the clergy, and the people. In all three cases he had acted consistently with the interest of the state and of his subjects; for, though his marriage may appear to be an exclusively personal concern, still the circumstance that, at a time when all bowed to the will of the pope and the clergy, he dared to oppose him, could not fail to produce the best results for the independence of the country. Where might constitutes right, courage and energy are the most irremissible conditions of sovereignty; and from what he did in the first years of his reign, from the way in which he executed his desperate enterprize against England,



William might have become the benefactor, the founder of a happy futurity for his people. He did become their scourge, the cause of a century of calamities, of endless devastations and misery; for he thought just the same as those on whom he had imposed the God's peace; he considered his power only as the means of prosecuting the trade of robbery on a large scale. The conquest of England by the Normans has ultimately, after the lapse of centuries, furthered the improvement of mankind; for even vice and injustice seem at times destined to serve as footstools to right and truth. Whoever should, on that account, excuse and defend the Conqueror, might set up as advocate for the canonisation of a murderer, because the latter has, in his execution, furnished occasion for proclaiming the power of the law, and, therefore, his very crime was a circumstance beneficial to mankind. William never did, never could, think of these consequences: plunder, the acquisition of territory and treasure—the latter he carried to such an extent that he was the wealthiest prince of his time—were his only motives and the immediate results.

The whole world, which, in its simplicity, still falls down as it did a thousand years ago before those who are the greatest adepts in the arts of devastation and destruction, offered and still offers incense to the Conqueror, while chance—for so people are accustomed to call the misunderstood indications of Providence—had already pronounced his condemnation on the very day of his interment.

William the Conqueror, whose track, after his landing in England, was marked with blood, had himself proclaimed the God's peace, and scorned the God upon whose name he called, when he made his peace a law. He had decreed that the peace-breaker should not find a grave. Fate sat in judgment upon him, and declared the law valid.

William died at Rouen on the 10th of September, 1067. His sons, his relatives, and his courtiers did not wait till he should have drawn his last breath to forsake him; and when he expired, there was not a creature about him to close his eyes. His very servants, after they had divided his wearing apparel among themselves, dispersed. The naked corpse was left by itself in the priory of St. Gervais, and it was several days before any one thought of interring it. At length the clergy resolved that the king should be buried at Caen, but nobody would undertake to defray the expence of the conveyance and burial of his remains; till at last a peasant of the environs of Rouen, named, according to the chronicles, Herluin—perhaps the same who had married William's mother, Harlotte—came forward, and out of pity removed the great king to Caen. On approaching that city, the monks of the abbey of St. Etienne, the clergy, and the citizens, went forth to escort his remains to church and to the grave. But Fate forbade even this pomp at the interment of the Conqueror; a fire broke out in the city and dispersed the procession, so that a few monks and the lowly Herluin were the only persons left to attend the royal remains.

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At length they reached the church. After the solemn mass, Gislebert, bishop of Evreux, mounted the pulpit, and delivered a panegyric on the king, whose valour and magnanimity, justice and piety, and above all his liberality to the clergy, the prelate lauded in the most pompous terms. He then called upon the people to pray for the soul of the deceased monarch; and Fate chose precisely this moment to pronounce its veto. Asselin, son of Arthur, a citizen of Caen, raised his voice and cried *Harro!* over the corpse of the Conqueror. "Upon the spot where we stand, and where ye are about to bury the king, formerly stood the house of my father. William drove him illegally out of it, and he shall not be buried in the ground of which he robbed my father and myself. I demand restitution of this ground as my property. In the name of Rollo, who said that the first duty of the prince, as well as of the meanest subject, is to respect the law, and in the name of God who punishes injustice, I protest against the interment in this ground of the remains of him who has done so grievous a wrong to my father."

William himself had declared, about forty years before, that the peace-breaker should be denied a grave. Providence decreed that this law should be fulfilled. The clergy strove to silence Asselin, but the people took his part: the aged men of Caen declared that what he had said was true, and the citizens cried out that he was right, and that justice must be done him. And, by the side of the royal corpse, the bishops were obliged to purchase from

the citizen of Caen a grave for the king for sixty *sols*, and to make reparation for his injustice. Asselin was satisfied, but Fate and millions of other men whom the king had reduced to misery, were not propitiated; and when the coffin was lowering into the grave, it struck against the side and was broken in pieces, and the corpse fell out, burst, and diffused such a stench that the people hurried out of the church, the clergy omitted all the further ceremonies, and the grave was filled up.

Thus did the Conqueror at last find a grave. That grave "remained untouched till the year 1562, at which time it was forcibly opened by the Calvinists, who were persuaded that it contained great treasures. Having found in it nothing but William's skeleton, they put the bones in a piece of red taffeta, scattered them about the church, and broke the grave-stone in pieces. Most of the bones were collected by M. de Bras, and by him committed to the custody of M. de Canalu, a monk and procureur of the abbey, who deposited them with great care in his cell, with the intention of replacing them in their grave as soon as the disturbances were over. But, the city being soon afterwards taken by Coligny, the monks were expelled from the abbey, and the king's remains were again dispersed. At the time of these occurrences, the vicomte de Falaise procured from one of the insurgents a hip-bone, which he afterwards deposited in the new monument erected for the king."\*

\* *Antiquités Angl. Norm.* p. 53.

I like such indications of a higher law than that of the human will, and they may be found on every page of the book of history, if we only look for them. In this point of view, that leaf in the history of Caen which treats of the grave and funeral of the Conqueror is highly important: but the conduct of Herluin the peasant and Asselin the citizen likewise serve to illustrate the character of the people, and to render those scenes the more impressive. The one, who, when all that had lived upon the bounty of the king, that had shared the spoil with him, abandoned the royal corpse, took it under his protection, was the representative of the loyalty of the Normans to their princes, so long as they respected them: the other, Asselin and the citizens of Caen who espoused his cause, were the representatives of that proud spirit of manly independence which would not submit to injustice from the prince himself.

The history of Caen, for some time after William the Conqueror, goes hand in hand with that of Normandy in general. The wealth of England flowed into that province; and Caen, very frequently the residence of the kings of England, received its full share of the booty; so that, according to the chroniclers, under John the city was in no respect inferior to the capital of France. With the re-conquest of Normandy by the French commences the decline of the prosperity of Caen, which, for a time, was the less observable, because it was manifested only in the cessation of the in-



crease of the city ; whereas, all the other large towns of France kept steadily advancing in wealth and population. This stand-still was followed at a later period by a decidedly retrograde movement.

A few incidents recorded in the history of this city are worth mentioning. The inhabitants of Caen had forty ships in the battle off Sluys, in 1340, when the fleet of Edward III. gained a signal victory over that of France. Six years afterwards, Edward landed in Normandy, and his troops were soon in the vicinity of Caen. The royal officers in Caen purposed to burn the suburbs, in order to be the better able to defend the city : but the citizens opposed this intention, and declared that, in the open field, and alone, they were a match for the king of England, and that they would march against him. The loss of the battle and of the place were the consequences of this temerity ; but it was, at any rate, a proof of the courage of the inhabitants, and of their high opinion of their own prowess.

A few years later, in 1363, a sort of riot took place at Caen, and showed that, at a time when the nobles fancied themselves every thing and authorised to do what they pleased, the citizens had sufficient spirit to resent any ill treatment they might receive from them. A page took a horse to be shod, and the smith was unfortunate or awkward enough to hurt his hand a little, on which the page felled him to the ground with a stone. No sooner was the circumstance known than the people assembled,



and, in their rage, killed seventeen nobles and mortally wounded more than thirty.

Henry V. of England attempted to re-conquer Normandy. With this design he landed in 1417 in the lower province, laid siege to Caen, and took it. But even after he had penetrated into the city, the people continued to make a most desperate resistance; and it was not till the defenders, retiring from street to street, had been almost all slaughtered in the old market-place, now Place St. Sauveur, that the rest of the inhabitants surrendered. On this occasion no fewer than 3000 tradesmen and artisans emigrated. Caen continued till 1450 under the dominion of England; but it was with great reluctance that the Normans endured a foreign yoke. A Norman nobleman, putting himself at the head of a rabble (1431) in the sight of all Caen and of the English garrison, made prisoners of the English traders, 3000 in number, coming to the fair of St. Michael, near Bourg l'Abbé. In 1434, the nobles and the commons appeared with 50,000 men before Caen, the siege of which, however, the winter obliged them to raise.

At length Caen was again wrested from the hands of foreigners, and thenceforward down to the time of the Reformation the chronicles noted such days only in which the country was ravaged by plague or other calamities, or the city was visited by a king.

The Reformation, as we have seen elsewhere, found numerous partisans throughout all Nor-

mandy. The people, stedfastly adhering, after the German fashion, to old habits, were at first prepossessed against its doctrines, which, on their promulgation, found a willing ear, and ere long zealous adherents and propagators among the superior classes and in the more enlightened towns only. In Caen the scholars and individual ecclesiastics were their first confessors and disseminators. A different lever was required to cause the lower classes to exchange the old for the new, and the pressure of severe distress came, as in Germany, to second the teachers of reform. The people, especially in the country, were in a state of such abject indigence, that scarcely any but the clergy were able to pay taxes, and these had risen in 1558 to such a height that the parish priests and curates were forced to evade the payment of them by flight : hence mass had not been performed for many years in several villages, especially in the vicinity of Caen. It was during this interval that the preachers of reform came forward publicly at Caen. The people attached to the new doctrine hopes such as it never meant to encourage and never could justify. Their distress, their intolerable misery, caused them to hope for improvement from any change, and therefore they accepted just what was offered; thus the religious reform was half effected, because a political, a social reform was necessary, and they were in confident expectation of the latter. In Germany the like circumstances produced the same results.

The oppression of the people is necessarily productive of this mischievous consequence that the moment it ceases, the moment the force which kept down the spring is removed, it flies up with violence and shatters whatever is above it. The people is a ravenous beast only when roused to fury by ill-usage and hunger. At Caen the tempest at length hurst, and the Calvinists, after they had already in 1562 attempted in vain to take the castle, plundered for two days the churches and convents of the city, broke in pieces and burned such of the sacred utensils as appeared to them to be of no value, and, as I have before observed, spared not even the grave of the Conqueror and his consort Matilda. They then went to the town-house, and with audacious scorn demanded their wages.

The duke de Bouillon came from Rouen to restore order, as the old absurd system was called. But it was not long before Caen, after the battle of Dreux, fell entirely into the hands of the Calvinists; and there Admiral Coligny directed for a time the affairs of the Reformers.

The massacre of St. Bartholomew was succeeded at Caen by a tacit peace or armistice. The adherents of the old and the new faith here saw with equal horror how treachery and murder were resorted to as the last weapons alike of the old and the new doctrines.

The struggles of the Reformation in Caen were followed by a repose which but rarely furnished



occasion for remarkable incidents. Henry IV. presented the city with such an occasion. He had expelled the Jesuits, but that king who could say : "Paris is surely worth a mass," could not need much persuasion to recall the Jesuits, if their presence was more advantageous to him than their exile. Accordingly, he repealed, in 1606, the edict of banishment. Caen was not one of the cities where the new edict allowed the Jesuits to seek a harvest. In the following year, the Jesuits sent one of their fraternity to the king, to solicit, in the name of the city, the re-establishment of their order in Caen. This petition in the name of the city was only an innocent Jesuitical stratagem, and when the civic authorities heard how their name had been misused, exposed the pious fraud. The king, nevertheless, granted in 1607 the request of the Jesuits, and ordered the city to provide them with a building. The people opposed this measure with all their might, and it was not till after several energetic protests that, yielding to power, they suffered that to be done which they deemed themselves unable to prevent. But the courage to oppose the almighty will of an absolute sovereign, in a case where reason justifies this opposition, attests the independence of the Norman citizens.

Spiritual interests are unfortunately those whose importance the people in general are least capable of appreciating, otherwise the inhabitants of Caen would probably have made a stronger opposition to the re-introduction of the Jesuits. At least they,



as well as the majority of the inhabitants of Lower Normandy, showed a few years later, in 1639, that they were any thing but pliable in regard to material interests when they thought themselves wronged. A new tax upon leather excited riots in all Lower Normandy, especially in Caen, Avranches, Coutance, Valogne, St. Lo, and Bayeux. The shoemakers and cobblers every where gave the signal for rising, by their resistance to the officers of government who attempted to levy the tax ; and in almost every place were they aided and abetted in that resistance by the people. At Caen they plundered the house of the captain of the tax, who escaped with great difficulty. The government was obliged to send a detachment of troops to Caen, under whose protection the rioters were punished, broken alive upon the wheel, hanged (nine of them in Caen), condemned to the galleys and exile, and their houses pulled down. And with such barbarous punishments those in power conceived that the barbarous conduct of the people was expiated, and that they had given them an impressive lesson.

The revocation of the edict of Nantes, preceded in other places by the dragonades, the butchery of the Protestants by the soldiers of a Louis XIV., who were expressly sent on this mission, was attended with the most baneful consequences for Caen ; and from this period dates the decline of the city, which has been regularly progressive till almost the present time. Thirteen years later, in 1698, the intendant of Caen wrote

in answer to the inquiries of the court : " Since the year 1685, most of the wealthiest merchants and traders, who were dissenters, have gone abroad, and commerce has almost entirely forsaken the district of Caen." And yet a tall column in honour of Louis XIV. graces the Place royal of that city !

Thenceforward Caen merely vegetated, and it was not till the revolution that it regained any political importance. Its former flourishing trade it has not recovered, though Norman perseverance and industry have of late much improved the condition of the city.

A single name, that of Charlotte Corday, sums up the epoch of the revolution, and the interest of the people in behalf of it. Caen was from the first moment devoted to the revolution, and, so early as 1791, the citizens had proved their attachment by a conflict with a regiment in garrison there. They forced it to leave the place, after taking prisoner the officer by whom it was commanded. He attempted on the following day to disarm the civic guard which was escorting him to be examined, and was shot dead. In the following year, a second victim was sacrificed to the popular fury. M. Bageux, the procureur-general syndic, was accused of being in correspondence with the ex-ministers, Montmorin and de Lessert, and executed in the Place St. Sauveur, after he had in vain endeavoured to justify himself before the assembled people.

These two occurrences prove at any rate that the revolution found zealous partisans in Caen.

But they did not spring from the character of the people, any more than the Vandalism shown at a later period by certain royalists, who, after dragging the bust of Napoleon, by Canova, with a rope through the streets, dashed it in pieces; these were only the effects of the first excitement and the work of individuals. The whole province soon expressed itself in favour of the more moderate party in the Convention, for the Gironde and against the Mountain. The Normans, upright and energetic, and with true German spirit wishing for reform without revolution, did not perceive that the French revolution was produced by necessity, and by the contradiction of those who wanted no reform; that the fate of the latter depended on that of the former; that the revolution, and reform along with it, could not be saved but by the revolution. Add to this that Normandy had for centuries considered itself as a country independent of France; and that of course the notion of a federative republic entertained by the Girondists could not but find partisans there.

Caen was one of those cities which declared themselves most warmly for the Gironde, and against the Mountain, and boldly proclaimed their sentiments to the Convention. On the 29th of April, 1793, the general council of the commune of Caen voted an address to the Convention, to this effect: "Justly concerned at the atrocities which brigands are incessantly committing against representatives who possess our entire confidence, we should be



guilty towards our country, if, on so alarming an occasion, we were indifferent to the treasons of villains, whom plots hatched by crime have placed in the distinguished rank of representatives of the people. How can one help recoiling with horror at the sight of the profound abyss in which the Marats, the Robespierres, the Dantons, and many other members, have striven to drown liberty ! Let those venomous and sanguinary reptiles tremble ! Let them know that twenty-four millions of men have not sworn in vain to be free ! Let them lastly learn that a great nation, weary of their iniquities, incensed by their misdeeds, is preparing to take signal vengeance for atrocities not less frequent than sacrilegious !”

The noble spirit of the commune of Caen is expressed in this address, though one may be disposed to consider the reign of terror as at that time necessary for France in general. Revolutions are possible only where reform is impossible. France, having once arrived at the point at which the revolution commenced, was forced to submit to the consequences of this necessity, in order to preserve the seed from perishing along with the first unripe and bitter fruit.

Six weeks after the presentation of this address, on the 31st of May, 1793, Henriot stormed the Tuileries, and the Girondists succumbed to the Mountain, which, like an avalanche, rolled down upon and crushed them. Several of the Girondists fled first to Evreux, and afterwards to Caen,



where General Wimpfen, then commandant of the coasts of the Channel, organised the Girondist insurrection, which was finally quelled by the battle of Vernon.

Charlotte Corday had meanwhile avenged the Girondists on Marat. Fate decreed that this blood-thirsty fanatic should not quit the stage unpunished, and a delicate female was the instrument chosen to execute the sentence. The deed itself, however, served only to confirm an old maxim, that a political murder *never* accomplishes the object at which the murderer aims; and that, from Brutus to Charlotte Corday, this rule has not found a single exception. Marat's death only facilitated the victory over the Girondist insurrection, for assassination disarms the courageous man of that party which it is designed to benefit, while it irritates and incenses those against whom it is directed; it paralyses, like a spell, the friends of the murderer, and is a fury inciting the enemies of the latter to revenge. Never was the reign of terror stronger than the day after the death of Marat. In this very deed and its consequences might be seen a proof of the necessity at that time of the system of terror, after the hideous Marat, who at first animated it with his breath, had ceased to live. The fate of the human race depends on other laws than the will, the caprice, and the perversity of a single individual, whether he is called Cæsar, Charlemagne, or Napoleon: for, where we often imagine that we perceive the will of man only,

the eye of the inquirer who looks deeper discovers a higher law, which the hero, a creature of accident—like Napoleon, for instance, beginning at school, and finishing his career chained to a rock amidst the wide ocean—unconsciously obeys.

Notwithstanding the way in which the people of Caen had supported the Girondist insurrection, that city witnessed no executions during the reign of terror. The then rulers of France were probably too well acquainted with the people, and knew that the Norman may be conquered, not subdued; and besides, Robespierre and his adherents meant only to strike the heads, and left the unguarded flock in quiet.

That the Normans, and especially the people of Caen, are not to be affronted with impunity, they once shewed, by a lesson which they gave to the soldiers of Napoleon. In 1800, an officer of the 43d demi-brigade, then quartered at Caen, insulted a citizen; the people took the part of the latter, and drove the troops out of the city.

I subjoin one more incident, which, in its romantic turn, proves as clearly as possible the manly spirit and the sense of right which animated the Normans, even in opposition to the rule of Napoleon.

An emigrant, named Dascher, was in Normandy in 1810. The police knew that he was intriguing in the province in favour of the royal family, and offered a considerable reward for his apprehension. Dascher came to Caen, intending to embark there

for England, and found an asylum with a Madame de Vaubadon, who had squandered her property in extravagance. The police soon discovered that Dascher was concealed in her house, and offered her a sum of money to pay her debts, and a pension for life, if she would deliver him up. The bargain was struck, and she led her protégé, upon the pretext that he might embark at Luc, into a neighbouring wood, where the agents of the police fell upon and murdered him. The leader of this expedition, named Toisson, was presented with the same order that Napoleon wore at his bosom, and that *he* called the cross of honour. Such was the reward bestowed by the hero of a hundred battles! But the Normans, though then much attached to Napoleon, entertained different sentiments. The conduct of Vaubadon in the affair became public, and when, a few days afterwards, she appeared flaunting in a red dress at the theatre, the indignation of the audience was not to be repressed, and from all quarters proceeded shouts of "*A bas la robe rouge! à bas la robe du sang!*" The people broke open the door of her box, and tore the obnoxious garment from her back. Nothing but the interference of the police prevented the summary infliction of a milder punishment than actually awaited her. From that hour she became a maniac, and paid the penalty of her misdeed in a cell in the madhouse of Caen.



## CHAPTER XIX.

Character of the People—Evasive Answers—Caution of the Normans in making promises—Cause of this reserve—Litigious Character ascribed to the Normans—Apology for this propensity—Singing unusual in Lower Normandy—Rhymed Pleasantries of the Fishermen—Cider; its effects—Anecdotes illustrative of the Character of the people.

CALLING one day on Monsieur F——, I found him engaged in a dialogue with his servant. The subject of it was a vase which had been broken.

“Have you broken this vase?”

“What do you think, sir?”

“Has any one been in the room besides yourself?”

“Not that I know of.”

“Did you lock the door when you left it?”

“I am in the habit of doing so.”

“Did the cat get into the room?”

“I believe not.”

“How comes it to be broken, then?”

“I cannot tell.”

“Have you been dusting the room?”

“I do that every morning while you are at breakfast.”



"Perhaps you threw it down then from the mantelpiece?"

"I have not touched it."

My friend looked at me impatiently, and put an end to the examination. All these half evasive answers appeared to me striking proofs of the poor fellow's guilt. No sooner had he left the room than I communicated my opinion to his master, knowing that an accident, even though arising from awkwardness, could not be attended with any serious consequences for the servant, who was the most faithful creature in the world. F——, however, assured me that I was mistaken, and that, in spite of his evasive answers, the man was innocent. "You are not well acquainted," said he, "with our people in Lower Normandy"—the departments of Calvados, l'Orne, and la Manche form Lower Normandy, those of La Seine inferieure and l'Eure Upper Normandy—"otherwise these answers would not strike you. It is more than a mere proverb that the Norman never says *ni ver, ni nenni*—either yes or no."

Since my attention was directed to the subject, I have often found the proverb verified. It is an old observation, for centuries ago the Norman seems to have been equally reluctant to give a direct answer. The abbé Rivière, in his "Eloge des Normands," (Paris, 1748) thus expresses himself upon this point. "Where is there to be found greater love of truth than among these people? They are so fearful of telling a lie, they have such

an abhorrence of this fault, that they will not venture to say either yes or no, when you want them positively to assert or to deny something. They employ certain circumlocutions in order to evade doing either one or the other. This has drawn upon them the character of liars, and caused them to be decried as people who are prone to break their word. But those who thus traduce them have certainly not taken notice that they never promise to do a thing, but merely say that they can or cannot do it; in omitting to do it, therefore, they break no engagement, as they have given no positive promise. Thus, instead of treating them as liars, we ought rather to admire their caution and their shyness of any untruth whatever."

To prevent misconception, I must add at once that this eulogy is not a satire, but meant in perfect earnest. On the whole, however, the notion of the good abbé may be based on truth; for whoever would confine himself strictly to the truth must indeed strike the words *yes* and *no* out of his dictionary. The Norman is in general a lover of truth, and this quality may certainly have its share in his profound and irresistible aversion to yes and no.

But the history of Normandy sufficiently accounts for this reserve. From the moment that the tract of country now called Normandy is mentioned in the annals of history, we find the inhabitants for a thousand years and more under the iron yoke of a foreign conqueror. Cæsar led thither his legions; the Saxons had been there before him, and they

followed him. After them came the Franks, then the Normans, and when the Normans had conquered England, the English came in their turn and conquered Normandy. This incessant change may account for the caution of the Normans in their expressions. The juvenile impressions of nations are permanent. But the most grievous curse for Normandy was that which William the Conqueror brought upon it by his expedition against England. To the Normans who emigrated to that country, plunder and robbery became a second nature. The petty lords took example from their great leader, and when England afforded no more food for their rapacity, they came back to their native country to practise the lesson which they had there learned. Not only the blood spilt in the conquest calls for vengeance upon the conqueror, but that also which is shed in consequence of it. Nature, as well as history, shows us that she has a law which decrees that robbers shall tear one another in pieces on account of the plunder; that the sons of conquerors—the greatest pest that can afflict humanity—destroy each other. The generals of Alexander, the sons of Charlemagne, those of William the Conqueror, obeyed this fearful law of fate, of universal justice. The conquest itself may be beneficial for the future, like the pestilence, which purifies the air but is nevertheless the pestilence. Conquest is in general attended with this immediate consequence, that the assistants of the conqueror, the moment they are released



from the curb of his strong hand, fall foul of one another, to continue among themselves that part which they saw their lord and master perform. Normandy is an evidence of this truth, and for nearly a century after William the Conqueror's death, almost incessant war was waged between his sons and those of his companions in arms.

All this could not be without influence on the character of the people, and furnishes a natural explanation of that which at first sight appears strange. The people were obliged to be grave, reserved, and cautious, for they were wretched. They could not help becoming mistrustful; they had none in whom they could confide. The inhabitants of the meanest village were split into parties, and a plain yes to the simplest question might be a crime in the eyes of him by whom it was asked. When the Romans came, it was dangerous to reply in the affirmative to the question: "Are you a Gaul?" Under the Saxons and Normans, the state of things was much the same. When England ruled Normandy, and contested the possession of it with France, the Norman no longer knew whether he ought to call himself Norman, French, or English. During the civil wars, or rather the wars of the nobles, in which the latter chastised the people whenever they meant to fly in the face of the sovereign, in the wars of the Huguenots, in short, a direct answer to a simple question was frequently liable to put life in peril; for it might communicate welcome information to the inquirer, the spy, and cost the



poor peasant his life for betraying his lord or himself, he knew not how. I cannot help thinking that the Normans have gone through a school, in which they must perforce have learned caution, reserve, and distrust. In Caen, this jealousy is still carried so far that most of the citizens make real state secrets of their family affairs; and it is only with extreme precaution that they afford a peep at them to any one not belonging to the house.

I ascribe to the same circumstances the grounds for the popular notion which represents the Normans as fond of lawsuits. Conquest of itself renders the idea of property unsettled; for no one then knows whether that which belonged to him yesterday he can to-day call his own. It must further be considered that the wars of the nobles and the priests perpetuated in Normandy the times of the conquest. The peasant was the weaker party: he had no weapon but his right, no shield but the court of justice; and neither the conquest nor even internal wars were able utterly to destroy the German institutions, the courts, and especially the *Echiquier*. Thus the peasant had nothing left but this last protection, and he acquired the habit of appealing to it whenever he felt his weakness. We must, moreover, bear in mind that the Norman had a national jurisprudence, that he himself pronounced the verdict, and must therefore have been acquainted with the laws in order to account to ourselves for the manner in which he acquired the character of litigious. In all other parts of France there was

no law for the peasant, and of course he could not commence suits against the clergy and the nobles. But these classes found in Normandy a people which defended itself when any attempt was made to wrong it, and for this reason alone they called it litigious. This was natural. The statistics of the administration of justice show that the Norman provinces are by no means those in which most lawsuits are carried on; though, in a country so highly cultivated, and the seat of all possible branches of industry, interests must clash more than elsewhere, and of course afford abundant occasions for lawsuits.

All this, however, could not alter the notion so firmly established in France as to have become proverbial, and thus the Norman is and will continue to be decried as *processier*. The panegyrist of Normandy adverts to this subject also, and it is amusing to listen to him. "These people, you will say, must be malicious and quarrelsome in the highest degree, since they are so fully occupied in settling their differences and litigations. Say, on the contrary, that they have an unbounded attachment to justice; and if they go to law with their fellow-citizens for what in other countries may be considered a trifle, the cause is certainly not difficult to be discovered. It is this, that these Catos of Normandy regard the smallest faults as capital crimes which are not to be atoned for, and do not feel easy in their conscience if they do not denounce those who commit them, if they do not watch all their

steps and actions, nay, even tempt and try them now and then by involving them in petty quarrels. Have not the Normans been regarded as intolerably litigious, and seeking only quarrels and suits? Have they not been considered among all the people who surround them as a public pest? Have they not been treated as false witnesses and calumniators, while their only object was to help others to attain the same improvement at which they have arrived themselves? What a nice sense of justice in their mode of proceeding! They summon their fellow-citizen before the judge, for instance, sometimes on account of a trifling affront occasioned by a slight gust of passion; sometimes on account of a piece of ground which a crafty neighbour has taken possession of; at others on account of an inconsiderable damage done by an irrational animal to one of their fields, and for a thousand similar and equally trivial matters. They keep their advocates occupied for years together: whole reams of paper can scarcely hold the writings belonging to their suits; and wherefore all these pains and expences, if not the consequences of their love of order and justice, for which they not only spare nothing, but even sacrifice all they have in the world, presupposing that justice is honestly administered?"

Bravo! that I call making a virtue of necessity. The good abbé might himself serve for a most striking proof of the litigiousness of the Normans, for he is, as we have seen, an excellent advocate of a desperately bad cause, and thus a *demonstratio ad*



*oculos* of this peculiarity of the honest Normans, who have been hunted for three thousand years by all sorts of dogs. The abbé goes on and says : " It is not possible to catch them in a trap ; and if they never cheat any body, neither do they ever suffer others to cheat them." Here it must be confessed that he is quite right, and that it is extremely difficult to trick a Norman, for he has been brought up in a severe school, by which his wits have been sharpened. One can scarcely help wondering that, notwithstanding this discipline, he has not lost his goodnature, his integrity, and his buoyant spirits.

In the environs of Caen the peasant is more grave than in any other part of Lower Normandy. The decreasing prosperity of the country sufficiently accounts for this phenomenon. Here you rarely hear a song, and as rarely see the country-people dancing. A popular custom, which I observed several times in the evening, appeared to me a proof that formerly the people of Caen were fond of singing and mirth as well as their northern consanguineous neighbours. In spring, countless shoals of small fish, called *la monte*, ascend the Orne. Both banks of the river are then a scene of bustle in the evening. The fishermen repair thither, each provided with a lantern, which they hold over the water, and, enticing the fish to the surface by the light, they catch them in that manner. Merely as a picturesque scene, this custom was sufficiently interesting to me. But I soon perceived that these people called to one another in the dark, and seemed



to be conversing together. When once my attention was drawn to these curious dialogues, I listened to them more closely, and then heard that the answer invariably rhymed to the question, and that in this manner the fishermen bandied rhymed pleasantries, keen witticisms, and even abuse and contumely, from bank to bank. To hold this kind of dialogue is called *s'engueuler*, to *jaw* one another; and I was informed by natives that it is customary on other occasions, such as certain labours in the fields and woods. I believe I am not far wrong in supposing this practice to be akin to the Tyrolese and Swiss alternate songs, and in concluding that, in former times, before this sturdy race became morally and physically deteriorated by war, calamity, and distress, the Normans, instead of *jawing* one another, sang their songs, as is still the case here and there in Germany, in Sweden, in Switzerland, and in the Tyrol. Nations and their characters have their ruins, and this *engueuler* is surely one of them, which attests the ancient joyousness of the Lower Normans, who now are often so extremely grave.

The Norman is peaceable and honest, brave and hardy, bold and resolute. But you frequently see all these qualities degenerate, especially when the cider has been pushed about too briskly. This beverage, so innocent at first sight, is deceptive and mischievous, like the Norman himself sometimes. Intoxication with cider is more dangerous than with wine, beer, or even with ardent spirits; for it turns

men into wild beasts, and makes them irritable and quarrelsome; it is therefore no uncommon thing that at a drinking bout where the cider has been dealt out liberally, some of the party have fractured skulls or broken arms, or at least black eyes, to carry home with them. "Tell me what company you keep, and I will tell you who you are," is an adage that may often be true; but equally true is this saying, "Tell me what you drink, and I will tell you who you are."

As Caen is the capital, and, as it were, the representative of Lower Normandy, I will subjoin two or three anecdotes, which are, perhaps, better adapted than any reasoning to characterise the people of that country.

In the first place, here is an instance of the fondness for lawsuits and chicanery, as it is customary to charge the Lower Normans with that propensity. The circumstance happened not long ago. A village priest brought his chorister before a court of justice on the following charge: "My chorister is extremely ambitious, and wishes to have every thing his own way. In consequence of a dispute between him and me, occasioned by his ambitious pretensions and his obstinacy, I forbade him in future to sing or even to appear in the chorister's chair. But this obstinate fellow, caring not the least for my prohibition, told me that he was determined to sing in spite of my teeth; and next Sunday, during the office *solemne majus*, he seized the chorister's chair and clapped himself down in it, as though he were

lord and master there. As I would not make any disturbance at the moment, I suffered him to occupy the chair as usual, but this ambitious, obstinate, and malicious singer, impelled by a feeling of revenge, pitched the singing in a false key, and totally upset mine. This act of treachery produced the greatest effect: every body laughed, and I was forced to stop and begin again in the right key; and I call upon the court to award punishment for the affront offered me before all my parishioners." It is difficult to say who was in fault here, whether the priest, or the singer, who was a Lower Norman; perhaps both.

Another circumstance, which likewise occurred of late years, is a proof of the cunning of the Lower Normans. A butcher of Caen had bought a calf of a cattle-jobber in the environs. Half a gallon of cider was to clench the bargain, and the butcher jocosely observed in conversation, among other things, that he meant to smuggle the calf into the town in broad daylight, and to pass the *octroi* publicly, without paying. The cattle-dealer declared this to be impossible, and a wager was accordingly laid between him and the butcher, who merely made this condition, that he should lend him his dog for half an hour. He put the dog into a large sack, which he threw over his shoulder, and away he trudged to the city. On reaching the *Octroi*, he declared that he had nothing to pay, as there was only a dog in the sack, which he had just bought and shut up that he might not find his way



back to his former master. The officers of the Octroi would not take his story on trust, and insisted on seeing the dog. The butcher was therefore obliged to open his sack, and the dog naturally availed himself of the opportunity to run away. Off scampered the butcher after him, scolding and swearing all the way. In a quarter of an hour, he was again at the Octroi, with the sack on his shoulder as before. "You have given me a pretty chase," said he, peevishly. Next day he invited the officers to partake of a veal cutlet, with which, having won the wager, he treated them and the cattle-dealer.

The following anecdote is of older date, but not less characteristic. Louis XVI., in his journey through Normandy, heard a peasant in the environs of Caen singing a jovial popular song, and was so pleased with it that when it was finished he cried, *Bis ! bis !* The peasant inquired what that meant, and was told that it signified again, or once more. Accordingly, he sang the song a second time, on which the king gave him a piece of gold. The peasant cried *Bis ! bis !* and would probably have repeated the cry, if the king, laughing heartily, and giving him a second piece of money, had not said, *Assez ! assez !*

Another anecdote, though of a graver kind, is characteristic of the acuteness and quick resolve of the Normans. The crew of a ship had, during a tremendous storm, escaped from it in the long boat. The provisions were soon consumed, and hunger



impelled the seamen to cast lots which of them should die to prolong the lives of the rest. The lot fell upon a Norman, who immediately rose, and with an oar shattered the scull of another seaman, coolly saying that they must first eat up their dead comrade, and it would be his turn next.

All these anecdotes relate to persons of the lower class, and I think that they may serve to relieve me from the necessity of entering upon further illustrations of the character of the Lower Normans.

## CHAPTER XX.

Learned Societies in Caen—Remarks on the Society of Antiquaries—Dependence of the Provinces on Paris in regard to the Arts and Sciences—Efforts of M. de Caumont and M. Lair—Soirées given in honour of the latter—Newspapers and State of Parties in Caen—University—Obscurity of the Professors—Students—Public Instruction—Organisation of the Royal College—Strictures on Public Education—Progress of Scientific Education—State of Musical Science in Normandy—Conservatoire de la Musique.

CAEN was formerly called *la ville de sapience*, and I believe that it still deserves the name, only with this difference, that, whereas former times produced results, at the present day all is confined to aspirations. The number of literary societies here prove that there are people enough in Caen who take an active interest in the sciences. Ever since 1652 the city has possessed an "Academie des Sciences, Arts, et Belles Lettres," which only suspended its labours for a time during the revolution, but resumed them in 1800. Besides this general society, there are several particular ones. A "Société d'Agriculture et de Commerce," established in 1761, was dissolved by the revolution, but re-

vived in 1801. It endeavours, by the publication of its Archives, which circulate chiefly among enlightened country-people, by exhibitions of manufactured goods, and recently by horse-races, to effect improvements in agriculture, commerce, and the breeds of cattle. A "Société de Médecine," founded in 1802, likewise excites as far as lies in its power a zeal for the study of medicine, since 1825, by means of prizes. A "Société Linnéenne de la Normandie," instituted in 1823, publishes annually a volume of Memoirs, and strives in this way to diffuse a taste for the study of natural history. It numbers thirty-five members and two hundred and eighty correspondents. Since 1823, Caen has had also a "Société des Antiquaires de Normandie," which likewise publishes, from time to time, a volume of Memoirs containing some of the most learned papers on the antiquities of Normandy. Lastly, in 1832, an "Association Normande" was formed at Caen. "The object of the Association Normande," says the first article of its statutes, "is to further the progress of public morality, elementary instruction, industry, agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, in the departments composing the former province of Normandy. It will not do or authorize any thing that is contrary to the principles of freedom of trade; it claims the support of all men of talent belonging to the province, and will feel honoured by their communications." It is obvious that the object of this institution is rather philanthropic than literary. In

1834 it published an " *Annuaire des Cinq Departements de la Normandie*," in which are to be found very useful things among others too erudite, perhaps, for the nature of the society. It is composed of about four hundred members, who pay a yearly contribution of five francs.

It would lead me too far if I were to enter upon all the peculiarities of these different societies; I shall therefore confine myself to a few general observations. One of the most important of these societies is that of the antiquaries. It has very learned and very industrious members; but there is one awkward circumstance connected with antiquaries in general. I once read somewhere that shepherds, by continual association with the objects of their care, contract somewhat of the nature of the sheep; and the antiquary is mostly in the like predicament. He buries himself among antiquities till he involuntarily becomes himself a sort of social antique, so encrusted with the dust and dirt of hundreds and thousands of years, that it is difficult to recognize in him a member of the living generation. To this class belong the majority of the Norman antiquaries, at least in a literary point of view; for, in company, the Frenchman is brisk, lively, and juvenile, even though he is already standing with one foot in the grave and the other upon a ruin. So much as I have read of the *Memoirs of the Society of Antiquaries of Caen* goes no further than this, to give to a stone, a wall, a ditch, an old coin, an importance, which, impartially



Normandy are but journeymen in  
have not met with a single architect  
and they seem as yet to have no such  
that nothing can be constructed with  
and walls, and ditches. Upon the  
such researches are praiseworthy,  
that they should be considered as

The isolation, the dependence, in  
nority, in which Paris contrives to  
vinces, is again one of the principal  
state of things. Love must be re-  
becomes a truly living passion. So  
science: that also requires to be  
appreciated, encouraged, requited  
not fare thus in the provinces in-  
owing to centralisation that Havre  
though only eighteen leagues from Caen  
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The oppressive, the demoralizing, tendency of this state is felt in all the provinces of France, and in all parts of the kingdom the most distinguished men are rising against this mental despotism. At Caen, M. de Caumont is the champion of provincial emancipation. Very eminent as an archæologist, he dedicates his fortune and his time to science, and especially to the reform of the provinces. Still in the prime of life, he is the founder of most of the literary societies recently established in Caen. It was he too who first introduced literary congresses into France. At his instigation, the first literary congress held in that country met on the 20th of July, 1833, in Caen, and was attended by upwards of two hundred literary and scientific men. The second congress took place at Poitiers, a third at Douay, and it is possible that in time this institution may prove beneficial to the provinces, but its influence in promoting their emancipation was at first scarcely perceptible.

The best antidote to poison is poison—that is to say, against the centralisation of Paris nothing but a firm centralisation in the provinces can lead to a happy result. This experiment has not yet been tried in France. People feel there the pressure of the capital, but individuals only have ever attempted to resist it. M. de Caumont has even committed the grand mistake of founding several new literary societies in Caen, instead of exerting himself to get

considered, they are very often not found to possess, or which, at least, is scarcely in any instance sufficient to justify the exclusive devotion of time and study to the subject. Most of the antiquaries of Normandy are but journeymen in the science; I have not met with a single architect among them: and they seem as yet to have no suspicion whatever that nothing can be constructed with all these stones, and walls, and ditches. Upon the whole, I admit, such researches are praiseworthy, but it is a pity that they should be considered as the main point.

The isolation, the dependence, in a word, the minority, in which Paris contrives to keep the provinces, is again one of the principal causes of this state of things. Love must be returned before it becomes a truly living passion. So too the love of science: that also requires to be acknowledged, appreciated, encouraged, requited: but it does not fare thus in the provinces in France. It is owing to centralisation that Havre, for instance, though only eighteen leagues from Caen, has scarcely any scientific intercourse with the latter, and there is certainly not in Havre a complete set of all those publications of the literary societies of Caen. Some of them I did find in the town-library; and when they were brought to me, I had to cut open the virgin leaves with the paper-knife. They are scarcely to be seen, indeed, at the places of public resort, the coffee-houses, and reading-rooms in Caen itself; though they are obliged to provide themselves with the "*Revue de Paris*," the "*Revue*

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all those previously existing dissolved, or rather melted down into one. If Caen had one large society instead of five or six, and that one had at its command the united means of all, it might very soon attain importance, and through its organs force itself into notice in other places. This would be a difficult point to accomplish, for the partition of the provinces has called into existence there a number of inferior authorities, which all bow with the most Christian humility to the yoke of Paris, but are up in arms the moment any institution, or any distinguished man in the provinces, dares to oppose their omnipotence in their petty sphere. Difficult, however, as the remedy may be, it is the only one; for not till the provinces shall concentrate their scattered powers in this or that town or institution, will they be able to break the intellectual yoke of the capital.

Another name, highly and deservedly respected in Caen, is that of Lair. M. Lair is secretary of the Society of Agriculture and Commerce, and does a great deal of good in that situation. It was chiefly owing to him that prizes are given to the best farmers, that exhibitions of the productions of agriculture and manufactures take place, and that horse-races have recently been set on foot at Caen, for which he obtained prizes from the city and the government; though it is very likely that these competitions are expected to do more for improving the breed of horses in Normandy than they will accomplish.

M. Lair is a man who is animated with a sincere

love of the arts and sciences. He has written but little, and seems to make no pretensions to the character of a scholar—a circumstance that does the more honour to the soundness of his judgment. He has chosen for himself a vocation certainly not less creditable and much more beneficent, and become the patron of every enterprise for promoting art and science, the encourager of artists and literati. His house and his purse are ever open to those who claim his assistance in the name of art and science. He is rich; but, not satisfied with the interest of his property, as he had no children and none but wealthy relations, he gave it up for a life-annuity, which permits him to spend twice as much on his generous and laudable passion. If he were the favourite of an emperor—and he is infinitely more—future ages would speak of him as the Mæcenas of the nineteenth century. Honour to whom honour is due. And yet on such a man an English traveller, after receiving hospitality at his table, could strive to throw ridicule! It is right that the name of this traveller should be recorded—it was Dibdin, the bibliomaniac!

The arts and sciences have even penetrated in some degree into social life at Caen. I happened to be recommended to M. David, a merchant. On the very first day I met at his house with a clever young authoress, Mademoiselle Chuppin, who had obtained the prize for a History of Music in Normandy, and whose work had procured her access into all companies. I learned that this writer was the daughter

of a German mother, who, with the German blood and language, had imbibed a fondness for music. In the same company I found also a M. le Flaguais, a young poet, whose compositions are equally full of spirit and feeling.

A few days afterwards I was at a *soirée* at M. David's, which showed still more the influence of science on social life. M. Lair, who was about seventy, had exerted himself in making the arrangements for the first horse-races at Caen to such a degree that in a few days he fell ill, and his friends were apprehensive of losing him. M. David agreed with several artists and writers to celebrate his recovery; and the *fête* reflected as much honour on the giver as on him for whom it was given. As it appears to me to be somewhat illustrative of life at Caen, I shall say a few words on the subject.

Several persons who cultivate art and science, as well young as of maturer years, and many profane of both sexes, were invited. A young painter had made a picture of the race; Mademoiselle Chuppin, whom I have just mentioned, had written a spirited description of it; Le Flaguais had celebrated it in verse; and a young musician, whose name I have forgot, had composed a sort of concerto for violoncello and piano-forte, expressly for the occasion. It was indeed pleasing, and at the same time touching, to see how all had joined to pay deserved homage to the worthy veteran, and how each succeeding production devised to do him honour heightened his gratification, so that he at length exclaimed:—



“Vous voulez fêter ma convalescence, et vous me faites mourir de plaisir !” But it was not enough to lay modern art under contribution ; ancient customs and melodies were pressed into the service. After a lively round dance, the men and the women separated and formed two long rows. The women, dancing in couples up to the men, sang a song, which was then repeated by the men, dancing, according to an ancient popular practice in Normandy. The words were by M. Flaguais, but the tune probably many hundred years old.

After the venerable object of their felicitations had retired, the younger part of the company indulged in the pleasure of dancing. From the beginning to the end of the *soirée*, there reigned among all present a tone of kindness and familiarity which transformed strangers in the first ten minutes into friends and intimates.

Travellers always judge of the state of society in a town by those companies into which they happen to be introduced. This standard is as natural as it is fallacious. I conceive, however, that I am not far wrong in drawing conclusions from what I have seen at Caen respecting what I have not seen ; for on that evening there were persons of all classes at M. David's, and they all took equal interest in the homage paid to the friend of art and science. The majority of the company, however, belonged to the higher ranks of the middle class ; and one of my friends afterwards told me that a strait-laced stiffness pervades the aristocratic circles, as the Carlists, the



ancient noblesse of Normandy, have forgotten and learned less than those of the same order in any of the other provinces of France. On this point, however, I only speak from hearsay, and must leave to others the task of supplying accurate information respecting it.

Let me add a few words concerning the journals. In France the journals are real amphibia, living in the water and in the air, and having most of them cold blood. They are a thermometer of society, its opinions, and its wants, and the cold blood is therefore the more characteristic for the French of our days. Every French journal thrusts its head (*première part*) into the sphere of politics, wallows with its body (*faites diverses*) in the slough of egotism, and dabbles with its tail (*feuilleton*) in the stream of art and science. The members sometimes rebel against the trunk, which, however, in the end always retains the mastery. This amphibious nature of the French journals allows them to be talked of in conversation on every subject, whether politics, the arts, the sciences, social life, or whatever it may be, as they interfere in all, and in general mix the cards under the table.

At Caen there are two political papers, "Le Memorial," and "Le Pilote de Calvados." The first is the paper of the government and all the ministers; the latter is the dull mirror of all the oppositions in Paris, from the Constitutionnel to the National. The bourgeoisie, the middle class, and the people, are divided between these two principles. While

I was in Caen, a third political journal, "L'Avenir," was announced; M. Waner, known for a history of Caen, was to be at the head of it. The Carlists, notwithstanding their wealth and their numbers, have not yet set on foot a paper of their own; and a sort of legitimist *charivari*, "Le Momus Normand," dropped, after a short existence. The last election showed that the opposition had the majority among the electors; and the Carlists, when they came to be placed between the government and the opposition, secured the absolute majority to the latter.

Caen has not, as yet, a single literary periodical, properly so called. "Le Journal de Caen et de la Normandie," "L'Etudiant," "La Revue de Caen," "Le Momus," "La Revue de Calvados," successively arose and expired like ephemera: and even a more serious undertaking, "La Revue Normande," conducted by M. de Caumont, with the assistance of the ablest writers of Normandy, extended to no more than eight numbers, or two volumes. If we were thence to infer that the people of Caen and the Normans in general are indifferent to literature and science, we should wrong them; for, as I have already observed, you meet with the best reviews of Paris in all the reading-rooms, and in very many private houses. The editors of the publications enumerated above could not hit the proper tone, or acquire the necessary influence, as they were either too frivolous or too solid, like the "Revue Normande," too indigestible on account of its excessive

Far be it from me to assert that most of the professors of the university of Caen may not be very learned and very clever men: all I say is that not a creature in France knows any thing about their learning and their cleverness. Circumstances are as much to blame for this as their own conduct. Paris is France. This axiom is unfortunately but too true in many respects. Whoever cannot live in Paris must at least have friends there, who proclaim his merits, who are his representatives, as it were, if he means not to be buried and forgotten in his provincial town. This is the reason why all who surpass the ordinary standard betake themselves to Paris, why you very rarely find in the provincial towns a man really distinguished in art or science. Every Frenchman who feels within him a higher calling, feels also, on account of this very calling, the necessity for leaving his birthplace and directing his steps to Paris. He, who, whether artist or scholar, can be content to stay in his province, is either a man of no pretensions, no ambition, and may produce much that is excellent in privacy, or more commonly one whose mediocrity has more to fear than to hope from Paris, and who would be a cipher there, whereas he plays a part in his province. Of those unassuming and really clever men to whom I have just alluded, some are every where to be met with in the provinces; but the very circumstance that prevents them from seeking in Paris a wide field for their talents—their modesty—generally causes them to be unnoticed even in their province,



like the abbé Diguemarre in Havre, where he was not even known by name. Hence it is that persons of but moderate talents are left either for public life or as cultivators of art and science ; and hence too mediocrity is with few exceptions the character of the provinces. The professors of Caen are subject to this universal influence ; so that it is easy to infer why they are in the literary world almost unknown quantities, which, without doing them grievous injustice, we may designate by *x* and *y*.

Besides this cause of their lack of moral influence arising from centralisation, there are others of not less importance. The Frenchman is a very practical man, and on that account not much of a scholar. He studies only to arrive at this or that result. Voltaire was certainly one of the greatest scholars among the French, but he had studied only what was in his particular line, and confined his exclusive attention to such things as might be useful to him in attaining the goal which he proposed to himself—the overthrow of christianity, of the papal authority, and of the divine law. So long as he fights in this field we cannot withhold our admiration, for there nothing is unknown, nothing new to him ; he selects facts the most trivial as well as the most important, to be employed in the proper place in his work of destruction. But the moment even the great Voltaire retires from the field of battle chosen by himself, he is an absolute ignoramus, who scarcely knows a cabbage from an oak, and writes history like a schoolboy. Such are the French.



But to return to the university of Caen. This aspiration after an immediate result, which actuates every Frenchman in all that he undertakes, leads students to consider the university as merely a sort of preparatory school, and the professors as merely the preparers for the examination. Whatever is not necessary for the examination is disregarded; and if this could be got over without matriculation and without professors, it is certain that very few students would take the trouble to attend the university. It is obvious that learning of itself must be a secondary matter, and that the professors must lose in the eyes of the students that halo which surrounds them in the universities of Germany and other countries. The natural consequence is that the French, confining themselves to special studies, very often make clever advocates, judges, notaries, physicians, chemists, and naturalists, but are unfit for anything out of their particular sphere, because, from the commencement of their studies, they almost without exception keep in view only the nearest result, the examination, which recurs annually for all the students at the universities of France.

Amidst so many untoward influences, the professors themselves can seldom rise to a higher position. Most of them have no intercourse whatever with the students, whom they only see at their lectures, that is to say, if they attend them. The teacher is a stranger to the scholar, the scholar to the teacher; and how can it be otherwise, since the students regard the professors by no means as the

representatives of literature and science, but merely as the footstool on which they must step to attain the bachelor's degree! This state of things sufficiently explains why the professors of the provincial universities of France are, as such, wholly without consequence or influence.

The students in France do not form, as in other countries, a distinct class from the other citizens, with their own laws, customs, and even language. Neither from the behaviour nor the dress of a young man can you distinguish whether he is a student, a tradesman, or a clerk. There are some of the students who lead dissipated lives, and spend their time and their money as jovially as any Oxford collegians: but their pleasures do not bear the stamp of college life. A dashing lad of this class, who is frequently called, at French universities, *viveur*, is a regular customer at the coffee-house, where he plays at billiards with every one who has time and inclination, and familiarly thous the marker. He takes his cup of coffee, his *petit verre*, frequently a small bowl of mulled wine or punch out of thimble glasses, and finishes with a glass of water and sugar. In the evening he goes in general to the theatre, where he plays a principal part as critic, in spite of pit and boxes, claps or hisses as he pleases, kicks up a disturbance, gets into a quarrel, and challenges two or three of his neighbours. Ten to one the next morning the duel is transformed into a breakfast, with plenty of wine, oysters, and pasties. The genuine *viveur* of a French university keeps, as a

matter of course, his grisette, with whom he lives in a sort of marriage, which has its chains like lawful wedlock, and would therefore be an abomination to the students of most other countries.

Most of the students at Caen are natives of the environs, and sons of honest farmers, or dealers in butter and cheese, cattle or horse-jobbers. The height of their ambition is to become in time avoué or notary in a petty country town. Many have already served several years as clerks in the office of an avoué or notary, and therefore look very respectable. The majority of the Caen students betray their Low Norman origin: they are more grave and reserved than those of other French provincial universities. Many can scarcely become used before their last year to the somewhat higher kind of life which they find at Caen, and rejoice to get back again to their native town and to their *étude*, as they call the office of notaries and avoués. The shyness of this class of students is frequently ludicrous. In an excursion that I once made from Caen, I was seated beside such a youth, whose home was at Pont l'Evêque, and who was going to Caen to be matriculated. At first he was extremely communicative, but when, the elections having taken place a few days before, I chanced to ask two or three questions concerning the political spirit prevailing in his native place, he became silent and thoughtful, and assured me in a solemn tone that he never concerned himself about politics, nay, that as *clerc d'avoué* he considered it wrong to form any



opinion upon political questions. The poor fellow, as I now plainly perceived, mistook me for a spy; and it was impossible to regain his confidence. I would have given a good deal to read the account of his journey, in which he would no doubt acquaint his principal, Monsieur l'Avoué of Pont l'Evêque, with his alarming adventure, and the imminent danger which he had been in. Students of this class are frequently called Beotians.

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Public instruction in France is further advanced in regard to intellectual education than in other countries; but, in regard to moral education, it is generally in a deplorable state. A few remarks relative to the organization of the Collège Royal of Caen, which belongs, on many accounts, to the superior institutions of its kind in France, will serve to confirm this opinion. The direction and administration of every college in France is committed, like that of Caen, to a *proviseur*, who has the general superintendence over the religion, morals, behaviour, studies, and corporeal welfare of the pupils. At his side he has a *censeur*, whose functions embrace all that concerns the instruction and discipline of the scholars, and who, in case of necessity, supplies the place of the proviseur. Under these two superiors are the *maîtres d'études*, who personally look after and direct the pupils when they are not engaged in the classes. They see to it that they perform their tasks, and repeat with them the lessons



which have been set them in the different classes. The religious instruction and preparation for the first communion are committed to the *aumonier* of the college.

In all the colleges of France the pupils consist partly of *internes*, partly of *externes*. The first live in the school itself, and are wholly consigned to the care of the proviseur, the censeur, and the maîtres d'études; the latter live at home with their families, and come only during school-hours. In Caen, in the years 1811 and 1813, the number of the *internes* was 220, that of the *externes*, 160; in 1824, out of 350 scholars, there were only about 120 *internes*; in 1830, the school increased considerably, and consisted of 280 *internes* and 170 *externes*. Since that time the number of the pupils has been steadily augmenting.

These numbers alone serve in some measure to characterise the progress of public instruction. The imperial government promoted it generally, though it considered the sciences entirely from the immediately practical, the military, point of view. The Restoration, on the contrary, neglected it, and its stupid partisans but too often threw obstacles in its way. The number of the pupils decreased. The revolution of July, and the struggle that immediately preceded it, gave a new impulse to all France, and hence it was that, from 1824 to the end of 1830, the number of pupils at Caen increased 100, or more than a fourth. The like increase, in equal, frequently still more striking, proportions, has taken place throughout all France.

At present, the college of Caen numbers nearly 200 *internes*, boys from ten to sixteen, to whom the school has to supply the place of their family. Most of these are the sons of the more wealthy citizens, who are able to pay a higher sum for schooling: most of them, too, are destined to prosecute their studies when they leave this institution, in order to qualify themselves for the higher offices. From them proceeds the élite of the State, while most of the *externes* continue their studies to a certain point, in order then to follow another calling, as artisans, tradesmen, merchants, &c.

The *internes*, therefore, are the pupils destined hereafter to form the more polished portion of society, the givers of the *ton*; and the great mass of the higher classes of France at this day have spent their youth at a *collège royal*, or at boarding-school, to which, upon the whole, the following observations apply in a still stronger degree.

I set out at once with declaring it to be my opinion that this way of tearing children from their families, and giving them up body and soul to the school, is the main cause of the increasing demoralisation in France. Here the place of the father, who superintends and directs the moral education of the children, is supplied by a *proviseur*, a *censeur*; and that of the mother, who watches step by step, animates, fosters this education, by a *maître d'études*. On the choice of these *maîtres d'études* every thing depends; and he who can effectively supply the place of a mother, as the guide of her son's morals,

would be a wonder, must be a man of high talent, of profound feeling, a real genius. If this institution is to produce only tolerable fruit, the *maîtres d'études* ought to be chosen with extreme caution, and only the ablest, the most polished men, and such as offer the highest guarantee in a moral respect, should be selected for the office. Precisely the reverse is done every where, without exception, in France. He only who is unfit for teacher, who is not sufficiently instructed himself to be able to instruct others, is content with such a situation, and is selected for it in the colleges and the boarding-schools. The pay of the ordinary teachers is at least double, frequently treble, or even four times as great as that of a *maître d'études*, who deems himself extremely fortunate if he receives from 400 to 600 francs. The *proviscur*, the *censeur*, the masters, and lastly the scholars themselves, look upon them as a kind of servants, above the porter and shoeblick, indeed, but forming an intermediate link between them and the teachers. Six such *maîtres d'études* have the inspection of about 200 boys, so that each of them is the moral director of 33 boys. If each of these boys had a *maître d'études* to himself, never would he be able to compensate for the influence of the family in a moral respect; but a man who has to exercise such a superintendence over 30 or more boys can at most attend only to the external behaviour of the pupils, if even to that. The little respect in which these persons are held by the superiors of the school, and



the defective education which obliges them to take such a situation, are no secret to the pupils, and destroy any possible influence which they might have over the latter. Thus the boy advances to adolescence and manhood without having ever imbibed the doctrines of morality at a living spring : and it would be again a wonder if such an education were not to produce a generation ready to open the door of the heart to every immorality, to the grossest egotism, to infidelity, and to the fiend that extinguishes all the social affections.

In regard to the scientific education, the education of the mind, which pupils receive in the French colleges, it must be confessed that great progress has been made in that of late years. But I much fear that these improvements will produce an unnatural precocity ; and this appears the more probable when one sees boys who know every thing, and who are kept to their studies thirteen or fourteen hours a day, assuming the airs of men and joining in every conversation, as I have often enough witnessed in France.

The intellectual education of the boys in the college of Caen is committed to thirteen masters—three for the scientific instruction (in Latin and Greek) of the elementary classes ; three professors and an assistant professor for the classes of grammar. The others give instruction in English, rhetoric, the French language and literature, mathematics, physics, philosophy, natural history, history, and geography. It is evident from this list that the



youths must in the end become finished scholars; but there would be no objection to that, if this erudition were not acquired at the expence of a greater good, if, while the mind is instructed, the heart were not wholly neglected. But the moment seems now to be not far distant, when the errors in the system of education adopted in France shall be corrected; for people have at least begun of late to speak of the immorality of the present society, and if the disease is once known it will not be long before a physician appears. A prohibition of all boarding schools, and of all boarders at the *collèges royaux*, would be, it is true, a rather violent but tolerably radical remedy.

Till the year 1830, scarcely one in five of the pupils in the college of Caen received instruction in the *arts d'agrément*—that is to say, music, dancing, fencing, and riding. In regard to music, a great change has of late taken place, and that to the infinite advantage of the people of Caen. Like science, music became a kind of social want, and next a branch of instruction. How this has been gradually accomplished, I shall let that clever young writer, Mademoiselle Emma Chuppin, inform the reader.

“Towards the end of the year 1757,” says that lady, in her successful prize essay, *De l'état de la Musique en Normandie*, “the directors of the concerts (which had by way of exceptions been occasionally held before) presented a petition soliciting letters patent for their establishment. They were

told in reply that several large cities had in vain solicited the like favour, which his majesty had invariably refused, because concerts prevent youth from attending to studies which are more useful to the state than music. It appears nevertheless, that, in spite of the want of encouragement, these musical assemblies were held till 1792. Then came long years of mourning, during which the suppression of the *maîtrises* of the cathedrals, and the dispersion of the upper classes of society, caused any return to the delicious enjoyments of the art to appear impossible. Quiet, however, was gradually restored, and thus, after 1800, societies again arose, under the title of *Redoute*, partly devoted to dancing, partly to music.

“These first essays, subject to many interruptions, seemed to make the necessity for a solid institution more and more sensibly felt every day—such an institution as, while it should unite a great number of scattered talents, should serve to afford them the benefit of a noble emulation.

“Messrs. F. de Boislambert, L. de Coursanne, Robert and Alph. le Cavalier, opened, in the winter of 1824, a subscription, which was soon filled, and gave seven brilliant concerts, but they were not renewed in the following year.

“In 1826, Mr. Spencer Smith, who was joined by Messrs. Costy, Lair, de Caumont, &c., established a literary and musical society, with the title of *Cicilienne de Normandie*.

“At length, on the 8th of February, 1827,

M. de Montlivault, then prefect of our department, received from the minister of the interior the requisite permission for instituting the *Société philharmonique du Calvados*.

"A professor, M. Graverand of Caen, whose compositions are universally known, was appointed director of the orchestra of the society. The commercial class gave the requisite rooms, and Count d'Orseville, the then mayor, accepted the presidency.

"But there was one obstacle difficult to be overcome, and which, if not removed, would render the intended concerts impracticable. The point was to prevail upon a quantity of talents, not familiar with publicity, to seek that applause which they had a right to expect. As for the ladies, in particular, it was necessary to conquer at once their timidity and their modesty. Beneficence achieved this victory. Collections were made for the poor, and an annual concert was given for their benefit. M. de Magny undertook the organisation of the orchestra and of the vocal department—an undertaking attended with many difficulties, but which seemed to belong by right to the composer of *Circé*. Nothing, in fact, was capable of daunting his zeal, and, thanks to his exertions, the wealth that we possessed was brought to light by him. The number of amateurs increased daily; one brilliant concert followed another, and the first artists of the capital, anxious to display their talents here, found not only the most friendly reception from the Philharmonic Society of the Calvados, but also the most unanimous support.



“ The constantly progressive success of the concerts, the numerous applications for admission to them, the emulation which spread as if by magic through all classes, the arrival of several artists, all demonstrated the necessity of a singing school. M. Fr. d'Emiéville and Count d'Yson, a distinguished amateur of music, who has since rendered so many services to the society, showed all possible zeal for realising a plan which was designed to afford even to the poorest persons access to the study of music.

“ On the proposal of the administrative council of the society, M. Guerrier, singing-master, and one of the ablest pupils of the institution of M. Choron (in Paris) and M. Beziers were appointed to conduct the singing school. Since that time, M. Lair, president of the Philharmonic Society, whose name alone calls forth the idea of the purest and most enlightened patriotism, has founded annual prizes for the most distinguished pupils.

“ We have seen above that, till 1792, the *maîtrises* of the convents and cathedrals were the only regular institutions for instruction. Their abolition was still lamented by all the friends of the art, when, at the instigation of M. de St. Germain, the municipal council of Caen voted, in 1835, a *Conservatoire de Musique*. This institution, founded on a wider basis, promises to be the seminary of juvenile talents, which, trained and instructed from an early age, will in time spread themselves over all Normandy.

“ The example that has been set is already pro-



ducing fruit in the principal towns of Normandy. Musical societies, both public and private, are everywhere springing up. Bayeux, Lisieux, St. Lo, Coutances, Cherbourg, Granville, &c. already possess philharmonic societies. The number of teachers is continually augmenting : twelve years ago there were only four or five in Caen, whereas now that city has more than fifty, who are scarcely adequate to the instruction of their numerous scholars.

“ Music is thus become one of the first foundation stones of education ; and if all the young persons who receive instruction in it are not called to become great artists, the majority at least will, as in Germany, possess a general acquaintance with this art.”—So be it !

I have translated this whole passage because it is characteristic. This encroachment of art and science upon purely social life is a genuine German feature. So are those *redoutes*, where they danced and sang, and gave little concerts. In all the rest of France nothing of the sort took place, nor was there any thing to remind a stranger of the casinos and museums of Germany. It is the German blood in the veins of the Normans that we here see asserting its rights ; and when in science they have once cleared away the great stones of archæology, against which they stumble at every step, when the seed of music which they have sown shall have produced its fruit, the Normans will prove that the native country of Corneille, of Bernardin de St. Pierre, of Chateaubriand, of Casimir Delavigne,

and of Armand Carrel, need not be behind any other part of France in art and science ; and that a province which has produced the two greatest French composers of modern times, Boieldieu and Auber (the latter from Caen) might in music give the *ton* to France, as formerly, in its *trouvères* and in Basselin, it opened a new career in art to the French, and as at the present day it sets a pattern to the whole kingdom by its efforts to popularise music.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Commerce ; its decline at Caen—Flourishing State of Agriculture—Importance of the Apple-tree—Society of Agriculture—Introduction of Lammas Wheat—Cattle-breeding—Prince Polignac's Merino Flocks—Mismanagement of Horses—Influence of Horse-jobbing—Manners and Customs of the People—Celebration of Twelfth Day—Easter—St. John's Eve—Emigration of Labourers ; its pernicious influence.

CAEN was formerly one of the most flourishing commercial towns of Normandy. The overflowing of the Orne, which once permitted the larger trading vessels to come up to the port of Caen, whereas those of middling size only can now proceed so far, and even this passage is liable to many impediments, is one of the causes of the gradual decrease of the commerce of Caen. For this reason, the citizens have, for a century past, been proposing a canal system for the Orne, and it is surprising that the only result has hitherto been occasional attempts, which have soon been abandoned again. But the principal cause of the decline of the commerce of Caen lies deeper than in the obstructions thrown in its way by the river. Since Caen has ceased to be one of the capitals of an independent

province, since the revocation of the edict of Nantes drove away most of its merchants and manufacturers, and especially since the foundation of Havre, commerce must necessarily retire from Caen, and a canal to the sea would make little alteration.

The increased activity consequent on the revolution of 1830 seems to have given more life, for a time, to the commerce of Caen ; for, whereas in 1825 only 769 vessels entered the port, in 1832 their number amounted to 868 French and 73 foreign, and in 1833 to 919 French and 100 foreign ; but it then sunk again to the previous average, and a still greater diminution is expected. But, as trade declines, agriculture and cattle-breeding are improving in the environs of Caen and all Lower Normandy in general. In the valleys of the Touque, Dive, and Aure, there are the finest meadows in all France, and the horned cattle of these parts are celebrated far and near ; while the cheese of Mignat, Livardt, and Pont l'Evêque, and the butter of Isigny, belong to the delicacies of the capital. The chalky soil of Lisieux, Falaise, Bayeux, and Caen, produces abundant crops of excellent corn ; and in the western hilly parts of Falaise, in the arrondissement of Vire, where formerly buckwheat, rye, barley, and oats alone were scantily cultivated, you now see the richest artificial meadows, the most luxuriant corn-fields, and very rarely a waste piece of ground. Throughout the whole province, fruit is largely cultivated, and it produces great quantities of cider and spirituous liquors.



The apple-tree, which seems to have been brought from Spain, at the time when the kings of Navarre resided in general in Normandy—the word *cidre* at least is the Spanish *cidra*—is the breadfruit tree of Normandy; and it is no wonder that the Norman speaks of this tree with a filial affection and veneration, and calls it, with Bernardin de St. Pierre, “l’arbre de mon pays.” In the *Annales* of the Society of Agriculture and Commerce, I have read a formal panegyric on this tree, in which the kindly disposition of the Norman extends itself to Nature. That, whether in its spring or summer, autumn or winter dress, it is an ornament to the country, may readily be conceived, but that its fruit fills store-room, cellar, and kitchen, that it feeds man and beast, and finally serves for manure, that, in short, it is all in all, can be seen in Normandy only. The apples which are not consumed as such, or exported, are pressed and yield cider, the wine of the province. Such as are not fit for cider serve for making brandy or vinegar. The pomace, or pulp, from which the juice has been pressed, supplies fodder for cattle: mixed with vegetable mould, it forms a capital manure for poor land; and in districts where wood is scarce, this substance is dried and used in the following year for fuel. Thus it is easy to account for the affection of the Norman for “the tree of his country,” even when not clad in its spring livery—the most beautiful holiday dress in which I ever saw any land salute the young sun and the “maiden of another clime.”

The Caen Society of Agriculture and Commerce

contributes not a little to the flourishing state of agriculture. It is owing to this institution that English wheat (lammas, red wheat) which ripens earlier, is much more productive, and requires less time and trouble in its cultivation than ordinary wheat, has extended beyond the limits of the province, and is spreading farther and farther in France. The circumstances of its introduction into Normandy are interesting. An Englishman, named Weathercroft, who emigrated on account of his opinions, settled at Caen, and had some seed wheat brought over from his own country. Among the crop, in the following year, were two ears of lammas wheat, and these two ears were the Adam and Eve of an innumerable posterity now spread over almost all France, and which threatens to exterminate the ordinary kind of wheat. It was in 1797 that these two ears were gathered. If France has lost millions through the war with England, perhaps these two grains of corn, sent accidentally from that country, have made ample amends for the mischief.

The Society of Agriculture has moreover the merit of having instituted prizes not only for the best productions of the soil, but also for labourers. I am not aware that in this point the example of the English Agricultural Societies has been adopted in any other part of France. This kind of competition might be extended to every branch of manufactures and arts. The idea is as old as history, and gave rise some thousand years ago to the

Olympic games. If a Greek were to come to life, and to witness our popular games and festivities, he would lie down again in his grave without regret.

Cattle-breeding is in a flourishing state in the whole of Lower Normandy. It is well known that Prince Polignac took particular pains to introduce the breed of merinos into Normandy, and that in 1827 he had no fewer than 16,000 sheep of that breed in the province ; but it is equally well known that, as Polignac could not turn this trade to account, all France was forced to assist him to bear the expence of carrying it on, since the government imposed in his favour a higher duty on the importation of wool, and thus kept him on his legs. Polignac afterwards became minister, and seems while in office to have kept an eye upon his sheep ; but a few unruly rams upset the whole ministerial sheep-breeding speculation.

The Agricultural Society of Caen has instituted prizes also for the best horses and horned cattle, and thus contributed to the improvement of the breeds. But the nature of the country itself incites the inhabitants to this pursuit, and the Normans have long been celebrated for the skill with which they carry it on. Of late years, however, the horses, in particular of Caen and the environs, have lost somewhat of their old repute. This is owing to the way in which they are reared ; and, as the Agricultural Society has publicly explained the cause, it is to be hoped that the evil will be remedied. The young horses in the neighbourhood of



Caen are in general ill fed and kept to hard work. At eighteen months or two years old, they are employed without mercy, like older animals, in the operations of farming, and worked till three and a half in a way that cannot but be injurious to them. In order to sell them to advantage in the nearest market, the owners then shut them up for one hundred days in warm and dark stables, cover them with woollen cloths, and give them no exercise. During the first fifteen or twenty days of this confinement, they are allowed very little food; but after that they are supplied with as much oats, barley, horse-beans, barley-meal, and Swedish turnips as they can possibly eat, just as if they were fattening for the butcher. To obviate the consequences of want of exercise, frequent bleeding is resorted to. This treatment renders the animal fat and plump, and gives him a glossy skin; but at the same time duly prepares him for all sorts of diseases; and numbers of the finest looking horses, sold after their release—the term used is *affranchir*—in the market of Caen, soon disappoint the expectations formed from their brilliant appearance.

Horse-jobbing seems also to have exercised a moral influence on the inhabitants of Caen and the environs. They have the reputation of being so litigious that you cannot do any business whatever without writings, signed, sealed, and duly attested by the authorities, unless you would like to have a little suit into the bargain, and horse-dealing transactions may certainly tend to strengthen this pro-



pensity in a particular manner, on account of the tricks and contradictions to which they give rise. But the real moral ground of the fondness of the Normans for litigation is of a different kind: I have adverted to it elsewhere.

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The Norman is more attached than the inhabitant of any other province of France, excepting, perhaps, the Alsatian, to his ancient manners and customs; and some of these in Caen and the environs, which, though they are disappearing more and more in the towns, are repeated from year to year in the country, may be traced back without much trouble to the times of Roman or Saxon paganism. The Norman, like the German, is in general not content to take the festival as a festival. He strives to give it a tincture of the wonderful, the spectral. He has a feeling of the presence of a higher power; and his understanding does not allow him to recognize in its operations and effects the great Spirit which rules all Nature. Ignorance does not lead necessarily to superstition; for there are many ignorant persons who have shaken off superstition at the same time with faith. Something more is requisite—a living, a creative imagination, and a mind open to external impressions. Superstition is poetry; and a people that is superstitious has hopes that some day, when superstition is transformed not into unbelief but into belief, of producing poetic creations. Malherbe, Corneille, Bernardin de St.

Pierre, Delavigne, and many others who have celebrated Normandy as their native land, have owed perhaps more to this national quality of the Norman than they were themselves aware of.

In Caen, and still more in its environs, Epiphany, Twelfth Day, is a festival of the poor. Every family has its cake called "*le gateau des rois*." It is cut into one more than as many pieces as there are members in the family; to each, present or absent, a share is allotted, and the supernumerary portion is "*la part du bon Dieu*"—the share of the good God. After the cake is cut up, one of the children creeps under the table, and the father asks, "Who is this piece for?" and the child answers for such or such a one, or for "*le bon Dieu*." Each takes his piece, and whoever chances to get a bean that has been baked in the cake is the king of the festival. The share of the absent is reserved for them; it is carefully put away, and serves as a barometer of the health of the distant owner. If he is well, it takes no injury; if he is ill, it contracts a little mould; and if he dies, it becomes quite spoiled. The beggars from all the country round soon appear; and in an ancient song, accompanied with wretched music, they address themselves to the king of the house, soliciting "*la part du bon dieu*." The song, hymn, or whatever it may be called, is as follows:

Bon soir toute la compagnie d'cette maison :  
 Dieu vous envoie bonne année et des biens à foison !  
 Nous sommes de pays étrangers venus en ce lieu  
 Pour vous faire la demande de la part à Dieu.

In this simple custom there is so much feeling, so much that is childlike, that it suffices of itself to characterise a people who could preserve it during the storms of recent times.

At Easter, the same scene is repeated in a different form.

On Easter Sunday evening, or Easter Monday morning, the environs of Caen resound on all sides with the music of numerous bands. They go from door to door, and sing an old hymn: a couple of stanzas of which I subjoin:—

Séchez les larmes de vos yeux,  
Le roi de la terre et des cieux,  
Est ressuscité glorieux.

Alleluja !

Donnez quelque chose au chanteur,  
Qui chant les louanges du seigneur.

Un jour viendra  
Dieu vous l'rendra.

Alleluja !

It is rarely that this appeal has not the effect of obtaining for the singer a few eggs or pieces of money. But if the person addressed is himself poor, he replies with this pleasantry:—

Pauvre chanteur, t'es mal venu,  
Not' poul' n'a pas encor ponda.

Demain viendra,  
Not' cat (chat) pondra.

Alleluja !

The beggars then go farther, pocketing the joke.

On St. John's eve, you see in the environs of Caen bonfires blazing on every hill, and lads and lasses dancing around them. The learned assert



that this festival derives its origin from Roman paganism, and that it was in reality a festival of Ceres, when the husbandmen ran through the fields with burning firebrands to represent the search after Proserpine, and that this was transformed into a Christian festival, at which the minister of St. John's church has a right to kindle the first bonfire.

Another festival seems to be derived from the Saxons. On Christmas eve the children light torches of fir, and hail the new-born Christ with dancing and singing. It is known that among the ancient Saxons the year began with this day, and that new year's night was celebrated by them in the same manner. Superstition gave a particular import to these torch-dances. The torches are sprinkled with holy water, kept the whole year, and lighted whenever it thunders, in order to protect the house from the lightning. The same custom is met with along the Rhine.

Formerly popular festivals of this kind were more frequent, and the clergy themselves encouraged these customs, and especially the carnival, which is so widely diffused, after they had borrowed them from the pagan priests.

It is lamentable to see how seldom such customs and festivals, which, while they pay homage to absurdity, nevertheless have their fair side tending to elevate the mind, can be attacked without destroying the sound kernel along with the rotten fruit. But such is man: when he would drive away the fly, he fetches, like the bear in the fable, a huge



stone, and dashes in pieces, not only the insect, but also the head from which he means to scare it. The philosophers of the eighteenth and their apes in the nineteenth century acted and act, for the most part, very like the bear in the fable.

Caen and the environs were formerly very wealthy, and the country is in consequence extremely populous. The decline of trade has necessarily had an injurious influence there; hence there is a great number of idle hands. But the Norman is too spirited to put up quietly with his distress; and as he combines in himself, like his German ancestors, the two opposite sentiments, fondness for emigration and love of country, he soon resolves to quit his native land, and to seek elsewhere what he cannot find at home. Thousands of labourers from Caen and the vicinity, commonly called *tailleurs de pierres*, because, while they are at home, they are mostly employed in the stone-quarries, leave the country in spring, work in Havre, Cherbourg, and Paris, till towards autumn, and then return to get in the harvest, and to pass the winter at home. The women, during the absence of their husbands, earn their bread by lace-making.

This emigration from the environs of Caen is of incalculable consequence for all Lower Normandy, and begins already to show its fruit. I am thoroughly convinced that marriage, a family, are the strongest defences of morality, and wherever I have been I have found proofs of the truth of this opinion. This partial migration releases husband

and wife for six or eight months from the bonds of matrimony. The man seeks and finds abroad compensation for his privations, and the woman remains at home without a protector. This circumstance alone must have very great influence. The men, moreover, bring back from their travels a number of books, and in general such only as aggravate the evil, without tending to enlighten—those stupid novels of Jules Janin's school or manufactory, those luscious stories of love-intrigues. In winter evenings the females, married and single, with their implements, meet sometimes in one house, sometimes in another, where one of the men reads a novel of this kind, and thus sows the seed which he has brought with him from the capital. Of course, as soon as the men are gone again, the women strive to act the novel to which they have been listening. Hence, such a corruption of manners, such a moral depravity, pervade this class of people as are not to be found in any other part of Normandy, and as perhaps cannot be checked but by the formation of institutions in the country itself for the employment of the idle hands—if, however, it be possible to exterminate an evil that grows rank as weeds upon a neglected soil. Distress is the nurse of vice and crime, and he only is a preacher of worth and morality who strives to find a permanent remedy for it. But how is it to be remedied? This is the question, around which at the present day the world and history revolve as round their axes; and it is a most important point

that the pilots who are at the helm of states have been compelled to ask this question. The future must decide whether railroads will afford a remedy, whether the material part of the question alone needs an answer, or whether men must become men, and subjects citizens, before the most complete material amendment can produce a permanent effect.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Bayeux—The Cathedral—Spirit and Moral State of the Clergy—Ancient Importance of the Town—Its present Trade—Bayeux Tapestry—Popular Superstitions; German Origin of some of them encouraged by the Clergy—Fetiches—Tradition of St. Loup—The Parson's Conjuring-Book—The Fairy of Argouges—Patois of the People of the Bessin—Their expressive names for natural Objects—Proverbs illustrative of their Character—Popular Song—Miraculous Cures—Belief in Witchcraft.

THE road from Caen to Bayeux runs through rich corn-fields, varying with luxuriant meadows, adorned with the apple-tree, which is never wanting in Normandy. Here and there rise small hills, rarely covered with wood, so that you may overlook the country for a considerable distance, with its Norman-Gothic church-steeple and its neat villages. In spring you may fancy that you are riding through a continued series of pleasure-grounds.

At length the beautiful cathedral of Bayeux appears in view. It is very ancient, and of course the more remarkable for the amateur. It was formerly very rich, and a list of its treasures, made in 1476, *va presque à l'infini*, according to the expression of a Norman historian. These treasures have, it is true, disappeared; the Huguenots robbed the church of



some of them, and the Revolution dispersed the rest ; and this ecclesiastical wealth is doing at this day more wonders among the people than ever did relic in the hand of a priest. This, however, has not had the effect of extirpating that cancer which prevails in all countries governed by the clergy—I mean beggary—for on the road from Caen to Bayeux our charity was solicited by at least a dozen boys and old men.

Bayeux seems to have been one of the towns which, after the immigration of the Normans, was inhabited exclusively by them, and where they kept themselves longest unmixed with the French. William Longsword, at least, said, concerning the education of his son Richard, to Boton, earl of the Bessin, “ If I have him brought up at Rouen, he will not learn Danish, for nobody here speaks that language. But I wish to see him educated in such a manner as to learn to speak Danish. Here they speak nothing but Romane : but at Bayeux most of the inhabitants can talk Danish only. Therefore it is my wish, Sir Boton, that he should reside with you, and that you should take upon you the care of his education.”\*

- \* Se a Roeme le faz garder  
E norir gaires lungiment,  
Il ne sara parler neient  
Daneis, car nul nel i parole.  
Si voil kil seit a tell escole  
Ke as daneis sace parler.  
Se ne soient neient forz romane  
Mez a Bayues parler se daneis non,

Bayeux was and still is the see of a bishop : most of the clergy resident there, who could not forgive the Revolution for having sent out the golden apostles into the world to preach, were always stanch partisans of the Bourbons, and at the present day are in general Carlists. The majority of the inhabitants of Bayeux, who live in a great measure by the clergy, and are under their influence, sing Amen whenever their reverences pronounce a blessing or a curse.

A few days after my arrival at Bayeux, a festival

Et pur ce sire quens Boton  
Voil ke vos l'aiez ensemble ad vos  
Et de li enseigner curios.

Le Roman de Rou.

Dudo, p. 112, says: "*Quoniam quidem Rothomagensis civitas romana potius quam dacisca utitur eloquentia, et Bajocacensis fruitur frequentius dacisca lingua quam romana.*" This passage is probably the original source of the above anecdote. We see from it that the writer of the romance goes farther than the chronicler, when he says that nobody in Rouen spoke Danish, while the latter merely asserts that the Romane language was more common there. Perhaps this passage of the chronicle, which may be founded on a fact—the Danish language at Bayeux and the education of Richard in that town for the purpose of learning Danish—has a different meaning. The Norman settlers consisted of Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, and even Saxons. Rollo was a Norwegian, and it is to be presumed that the Norwegians collected around him in the greatest number. The Danes, on the other hand, appear to have settled with their leader at Bayeux, and to have been most numerous there. Hence it was that William Longsword sent his son thither to learn Danish. But it is contrary to the nature of things to assume that, twenty years after the establishment of the Normans in Rouen, their principal seat, none of them could speak the Norman language.

was held there, of which I shall say a few words, for after that I need say no more concerning the moral state of the clergy in that city. The new bishop of Flours was consecrated at Bayeux by the bishop of that place. Several other bishops, the clergy from the whole adjacent country, and a great concourse of people, had been drawn to Bayeux by this solemnity. The church was sumptuously decorated and parted off into several divisions. Here is the ticket of the prices of admittance :—

Avant-Scene. Loges reservées . . .	10 Francs.
1ères Galeries . . . . .	5 —
Couloirs du Jube . . . . .	5 —
2des Loges, chapelles laterales . . .	2 —
3mes Loges . . . . .	50 cent.

The Caen paper, *le Pilote*, contained next day the following paragraph : “ In the evening, the manager of the theatre had likewise reason to be satisfied with his receipts. The places were not so dear, it is true, but the house was full ; and we observed in the first boxes the same faces and the same dresses as we had remarked in the morning in the galleries of the cathedral.”

This, methinks, is quite sufficient !

It is pretty certain that Bayeux was formerly one of the first towns of Lower Normandy ; and this we are authorised to assume, indeed, by the circumstance of its having been chosen for an episcopal see : at present it is little more than a village. Agriculture and cattle-breeding are the principal occupations of the inhabitants. The trade in butter is con-



siderable : the town sends annually about 120,000 pounds weight in small pots to Paris, and is said to make besides 5000 pounds of ordinary butter per week. A great number of the inhabitants, who amount to 3000, are engaged in making blonde ; and the neighbouring chalk-hills furnish a profitable source of subsistence.

The greatest curiosity of the town, a real mine for the antiquary, is the celebrated Bayeux tapestry. It represents the conquest of England, and is said to have been wrought under the direction of Matilda, consort of William the Conqueror. This point, however, is strongly disputed : and many are the pens that have been engaged in defending or attacking this notion. If it is really so ancient as it is considered, and as many striking arguments seem to prove it to be, it is of high importance with regard to the history of the conquest, or at least to the dress and manners of the times. It is well known that an envoy of Harold's, after he had seen the Normans, came back and said that William had landed with an army of priests ; and the reporter was supposed to have been really astonished at the great number of priests in William's army. The tapestry gives a different interpretation to the words of the messenger, for there the Normans are seen with the back of the head shorn, and shaven upper lip, which gave them the appearance of tonsured priests. This fashion, however, seems to have been soon abandoned, for half a century later complaints were made even at Rome of the luxuriant heads of



hair of the Norman priests, a circumstance which speaks indirectly in favour of the antiquity of the tapestry. In later times this ancient work was called to play a part which its royal author never dreamt of. When Bonaparte designed to invade England, he sent this tapestry upon its travels, and caused it to be exhibited in Rouen and Paris, to afford ocular demonstration that it was a mere trifle to conquer a nation which eight hundred years ago was not able to withstand the sovereign of Normandy alone. How little are great men very often !

But this is a subject which I had no intention to discuss. An inhabitant of Bayeux, M. Pluquet, has produced a little work of a class of which there are unluckily very few in France.\* As the particulars which he relates concerning Bayeux and its environs mostly apply, with mere local alterations, to the whole of Lower Normandy, I shall make no apology for introducing here some of the results of his book.

The source of popular tales, of ghost stories, is a lively imagination, which is not content to take the external phenomenon, but wants to know, seeks, and creates, the cause of it. Now poetry, if the people are really poetical, decks out this wonderful cause of the natural phenomenon with the riches of a fertile imagination ; and if they, like most of the tribes of German origin, look upon Nature with friendly eye, that too becomes instinct with life ; and the tree, the

\* "Contes Populaires, Prèjugés, Patois, et Proverbes de l'Arondissement de Bayeux. Rouen, 1834."

spring, the hill, the river, are transformed into living beings, that look down from the other world upon this of which we are denizens.

A German, if he were to mingle with the people of Normandy, and take the trouble to study their notions, sentiments, and manners, would soon find himself at home. He would there meet with the same stories which at once terrified and delighted him in childhood. The frightful werewolf, whose very name, *loup-garou* (warou, warwou, warwolf), is German, is an old acquaintance ; and he is equally familiar with the bone-gnawer, *rongeur d'os*, a man metamorphosed into a dog, dragging chains along the streets and picking up bones by the way. The Edda makes mention of men thus transformed by evil spirits into wolves or dogs.

The German origin of these two imaginary beings is undeniable : neither can it be doubted that, if the Gauls had here and there a little witch-story of their own, they were far surpassed by the Germans in their fondness for the wonderful, in their poetry of witchcraft, fairies, and goblins ; and if at the present day the Normans can keep pace with the German peasants, it is the German blood circulating in their veins that they have to thank for it.

The genuine German intuition of Nature, which is reflected in the language, and which infuses a new and wonderful life into the already so beautiful life of rivers, hills, trees, and meadows, has likewise been transmitted to the Normans. Everybody has seen in the meadows large circles where the grass is

withered and as if burned. The Norman calls these, as the English do, fairy-rings, *cercles des fées*, and attributes them to the same cause as was assigned to them by the rural population of Britain. If he hears a wolf howling at night, he knows that a troop of Lubins is galloping to the churchyard to dig up the dead, and that their leader is a huge black Lubin, who, when he sees a man approaching, cries, "Robert est mort ! Robert est mort !" on which signal the whole troop scamper off.

This natural disposition of the Normans was encouraged and developed by the belief in the miracles of Christianity, and by the solicitude of the priests to exhibit themselves and their predecessors in a higher light ; and if the belief in witches has maintained its ground for thousands of years, and it still exists in mass in France, and especially in Normandy, the clergy are more to blame for this than any thing else.

The anxiety of the clergy to fall in with the popular notions is manifested in Normandy in the wells and springs, which are mostly under the protection of a saint who has dispossessed some nymph of her right, and now performs the most miraculous cures, as she did before him. Should any one consider my remark concerning the influence of the clergy on the belief in witches as too severe, let him recollect that, one or two hundred years ago, the clergy burned witches without ceremony, or rather with great ceremony and pomp. So long as the memory of these executions lives among the people,



so long the belief in witches will not be exterminated. In Normandy that belief is still the order of the day; and every ailing cow, every bad crop, every thunder-storm, are the consequences of some spell, which none but a witch or wizard can dissolve. The spirits which rise from the grave, to beseech their friends and relatives to redeem them from purgatory, are still fresh in the memory of the Normans. Another catholic dogma howls at night in Normandy, through town and country, in the form of *fetiches*; for these *fetiches*, white as snow, and perfectly innocent, but extremely shy, since they instantly vanish if you attempt to lay hold of them, are no other than infants who have died unbaptized, and whose spirits, according to the catholic doctrine, float between heaven and hell, and know not what is to become of them, because they are not provided with the passport—a place in the baptismal register.

One of these supernatural stories current in the environs of Bayeux was to a certainty invented by the clergy themselves. It is called by the people “l’histoire de la bête de St. Loup.” A furious wolf did a great deal of mischief, at the time of the bishop St. Loup, in the suburbs of Bayeux and the surrounding villages. The bishop resolved to attack the beast himself: accordingly, he sought the ferocious animal, and, having made a rope of his stole, threw it about the wolf’s neck, and dragged him by it to the water and drowned him. From that time, in order to perpetuate the remembrance of the deed, the wolf, *la bête de St. Loup*, haunted



Bayeux, and prowled howling about the church of St. Loup. While he continued to do so, nobody could doubt the miracle; and even now that he has ceased to visit the town, very few sheep of the christian flock of Bayeux doubt the fact, for, is not a representation of it, hewn in stone, to be seen at the church?

Some of the stories current in the environs of Bayeux are so poetical and so humorous as to be worth recording. Göthe must have met with one of them somewhere or other. At Bayeux it is called *le grimoire du curé*—the parson's conjuring book—and it is thus related by the aged crone to her grandchildren: "There was once a parson near Bayeux, who had a mighty conjuring book, by means of which he could ban all sorts of spirits, both good and evil. One day, being called away suddenly to a sick person, he left his conjuring book upon the table. The bell-ringer chanced to come in, saw the book, peeped into it, and was overjoyed to find that it was the parson's wonderful book. He began to read, and, to try its power, he pronounced the form for calling up the devil, and the fiend instantly made his appearance. But the devil looked so hideous, that the bell-ringer, ready to faint with fright, dropped the book and made the sign of the cross. As he had called the devil himself, the cross had no power, but only served to enrage old Beelzebub. So he went up to the bell-ringer and asked: 'What do you want with me, impudent scoundrel?' The bell-ringer, more terri-

fied than before, had only just strength enough to get up for the purpose of running away. But the devil, seeing clearly that the man did not know how to lay him, seized him by the hair, lifted him up, and was just going to fly away with him, when luckily the parson came in and released the poor fellow from the clutches of the devil. The bell-ringer must have died of the fright, if the parson had not made him take a miraculous remedy. From that time he always locked up his conjuring book most carefully, and the bell-ringer never felt any desire to peep into it again.—So mind and never touch any conjuring book as long as you live.”

The devil seems in general to have been very submissive to the clergy, and the Norman proverb accordingly says :

Prêtres et bergers  
Sont sorciers.

Another story related in Bayeux is likewise founded on the skill of the priests in the black art ; for, according to it, Jean Patye, canon of Bayeux, once travelled all the way to Rome on the devil's shoulders, to sing matins, as a canon of Bayeux was bound to do every year on a certain day, and was back again in the church at Bayeux in an hour.

Another popular tale about the fairy of Argouges is not quite so frightful, and much more poetic and dramatic.

A knight of Argouges, near Bayeux, had in his peregrinations become acquainted with a fairy of

wonderful beauty and fallen deeply in love with her, as she had with him. From this time, the knight was the happiest man in the world, for the fairy conferred on him the treasures of the mountains and of the sea, and gave him victory whenever he fought ; so with her aid he once conquered a prodigious giant, who had never before met with his match. At length his love impelled the knight to offer his hand to the fairy, who had long possessed his heart. At first, she would not consent, but when he tried to persuade her, she said that men were inconstant, and that, besides, she as a fairy was immortal, while the knight was mortal, and that the very idea of being some time or other parted from her beloved husband would be too painful to her. And the knight made answer : " Though I am mortal, my love shall never die. Let me not be punished because I am only man, for my love to thee is more than human." And the fairy replied : " Well, I will consent, but upon one condition, death alone can and shall part us ; and that we may not think of parting, we must forget death. If thou wouldst have me marry thee, the word *death* must never pass thy lips." But the knight said : " The condition is so easy to fulfil that it is scarcely worth while to propose it." The fairy answered : " We shall see : the moment thou utterest that word, I shall leave thee and be wretched."

For many years they lived together as if they were in heaven ; but misunderstandings at last arose,



for the knight wished for a son, and it was not in the fairy's power to give him one. So one day they were invited to an entertainment, and the fairy looked out her finest clothes and her most splendid jewels. The knight had to wait down stairs for her, and she was a long, very long time dressing. Twice he sent up his page to the lady, with a request that she would make haste. And just as he was going to send the boy up for the third time, down came the fairy in all her glory. The knight angrily exclaimed: "Fair lady! be so good as to fetch death, for you are very slow about your work."

Scarcely had he pronounced the fatal word, when the fairy turned pale, looked at him once more with her large bright eye, in which a tear glistened, and vanished. Not till then was the knight of Argouges aware of what he had done and what he had lost. That very hour he fell sick, and every night the fairy flew around the pinnacles of his castle, crying with plaintive voice, "Death! death!" till at length the knight died. But the fairy is still living, as any one may convince himself, if he will go at midnight to the old castle, where he may hear her uttering lamentations and the parting cry of: "Death! death!"

I must confess that I have scarcely ever heard a finer fairy tale. If you inquire its origin, the antiquaries reply, that a knight, Robert d'Argouges, did really vanquish a gigantic German; that in the arms of these knights there was a representation of Faith, with their battle-cry, *la foi—la fê* in the



provincial dialect ; and that out of this *la fê* the people made the story of the fairy. Thus it is that if but a spark falls upon the imagination of a really poetic people, it is sure to take fire. Such a people has a future, and it is melancholy to see how a doctrine that knows nothing but interest, in order to get rid of an excrescence, gnaws at the root and strives to bring down the tree. Heaven grant that the reign of this doctrine may not last long enough to lead to the dreary abyss which is yawning to receive it !

The language is the people. The patois of the Bessin, the country round Bayeux, is a fresh proof of this. It is the shibboleth of the Normans of this district, and if history should ever be utterly forgotten, the patois alone would indicate the country from which those who speak it derive their origin. A great number of words might be cited, which are undoubtedly of German extraction.

But what, without this material affinity, would prove a kindred turn of mind, is the way in which the people of Bessin seize Nature, in which, not content with the most inexpressive names given by the French language to flowers and animals, they invent new, picturesque, and strongly characteristic designations. *Amourette des champs* (common chamomile), *amourette des près* (*brisa media*, quaking grass), *bec de corbeau* (*ranunculus arvensis*), *chemise de la bonne vierge* (lady's smock, bindweed), *crêve-chien* (*viburnum lantana*), *grasse-poulette* (*chenopodium album*, goose-foot), *lait de pie*

(*euphorbia sylvestris*), langue de brebis (*ranunculus flammula*), langue de bec (*carex glauca*), mouches d'eau (*geris paludosa*), pain de crapaud (champion commune), pas de lion (*ranunculus repens*), pate d'oie (*heracleum sphondylium*, cow-parsnip), queue de coq (*colium multiflorum*), queue de renard (*armaranthus rubens*), reveil-matin (*rumex sanguineus*), tête de chat and tête de loup (species of the *scabius*), tetin de souris (*sedum minus*), and many more, show with how keen an eye the peasant scrutinizes Nature, and gives flowers names, which for him have a signification. The French language, on the other hand, is as cold in this respect as most of the French are in the observation of Nature.

I am no botanist, and therefore cannot tell whether the French language has any proper names for those flowers and herbs to which Latin appellations are annexed in the above list, but I should rather suppose not ; because the author of the work in which I have met with them seems not to be acquainted with them, and also because the French language frequently passes by flowers, as it does the beautiful phenomena of nature in general, without deigning to give them a name, whereas on the useful it bestows the minutest attention. The Norman, on the other hand, shows in his expressive designations of flowers that he looks at Nature with the eye of a friend, that he is more familiar with her than the Frenchman, and that he calls her works by names which are dear, and, above all, intelligible to him.

In regard to the denominations of animals, this rustic language is just as plastic, as full of life, as rich in allusions, which prove that the people who speak it must have observed, thought, and felt, when they invented those names. It is natural that, with this gift of observation, we should meet with names for phenomena for which the French language has omitted to furnish special designations. Thus the French, like the English language, has no particular term for that species of lightning which is not accompanied by thunder, and which the Germans call *Wetterleuchten*. The peasant of the Bessin, feeling this deficiency, terms that sort of lightning *calin*.

I have extracted these words from a very incomplete vocabulary in the little work of M. Pluquet, and am certain that a closer study of this popular idiom would furnish occasion for far more comprehensive comparisons and remarks. The above, however, are sufficient to show that the Norman in general views Nature rather with German than with French eyes.

Proverbs present a farther medium for studying a people and its character. I am convinced that a consideration and comparison of all the proverbs common among the people of one country with those of another would accurately mark the characteristic differences of both. They are the living and breathing philosophy, politics, and experience of a people.

The proverbs current among the inhabitants of Lower Normandy attest, like their language, a con-



stant observation of Nature, in order to learn her secrets from her. The Bessinois is a farmer, and he has a proverbial farmer's calendar of his own:—

Pluie de Fevrier

Vaut jus de fumier.

Fevrier qui donne neige

Bel été nous plége (pledges, promises.)

Mars martille

Avril couille,

Avril le doux

Quand il se fache le pis de tout.

Froid mai et chaud juin

Donnent pain et vin.

En juignet (juillet)

La faucille au poignet.

But in his calendar the Norman pays more attention to festivals, for he is very religious.

A Noel au balcon,

A Pacques au tisson.

A Noel les mouchérons,

A Pacques les glaçons.

Le propre jour de rameaux

Sème oignon et porceau,

Pacques pluvieux

An fromenteux,

Après Pacques et les Rogations,

Ti des prêtres et d'oignons.

A la St. Barnabé

La faux au pré.

Passe la St. Clement

Ne sème plus le froment.



A la St. George  
Sème ton orge.

A la St. Laurent  
La faucille au froment.

A la St. Sacrement  
L'epi est au froment.

A la St. Urbain  
Le froment port grain.

A la St. Catherine  
Tout bois prend racine.

Si le soleil rit le jour St. Eulalie,  
Il y aura pommes et cidre à la folie.

Such are the rules of the Bessinois in regard to agriculture. He has reduced his practical philosophy also to proverbs. He is an enemy to all physic and physicians, and therefore says :—

Il faut mieux aller au moulin  
Que d'aller au medecin.

And again :—

Qui court après le mière (doctor) |  
Court après la bière.

His physic is :—

Soupe avant, soupe après,  
Fait vivre cent ans près.

Or this :—

Qui mange, feint, et dort,  
Ne doit avoir peur de mort.

Mal de tête  
— Veut dormir au repaitre.

He is fond of his home, and therefore tells you :—

A tout oiseau  
Son nid semble beau.

He is a good economist, and says on this point :—

Petit à petit  
L'oiseau fait son nid.

And further :—

Boudoir et kaabans (pleasures and fine clothes)  
Ne font pas riches gens.

“ Il ne faut pas faire vie qui druge (to drudge, work hard) mais vie qui dure.” [This is the Yorkshire adage : Take it as you can bide it.] So he is not apt to hurry himself, and thinks :—

Laisser bouillir le mouton.

Still he never thinks of sitting with his hands folded on his lap, for he well knows that

On aide bien à bon Dieu  
À faire de bon blé.

He expresses his sense of justice in the following proverb :—

La maison de pillard  
Perira tôt ou tard ;

And he is of opinion that the law and the government ought to be strong, for he says :—

Quand la haie est basse,  
Tout le monde y passe.

We also meet with traces of the mistrust of the Norman in the following :—

Fille fiancée  
N'est pas mariée.

Une fois vu  
Cent fois mécré.

I have already remarked that this mistrust is a consequence of the state of anarchy in which Normandy was so frequently placed by the different invasions, conquests, and civil wars, and a Bessin proverb which says, "S'il y a une bonne soire dans un pairier, c'est pour un cochon," seems to date from the period when oppression and violence had annihilated all law and justice.

All these rhyming proverbs indicate that the Norman has a musical ear. A couple of expressions that are frequently used, "Comme dit la chanson," and "Belle chanson n'en sera pas moins chantée," seem to denote that formerly the Normans were fond of singing. The ancient Norman *trouvères* furnish further evidence of this. I have already shown how, at Easter, Whitsuntide, and Epiphany, people go about in the country round Caen singing and playing. This custom is met with at Bayeux also, and the singers carry lighted torches, and the song sung by them is a proof of the jovial humour of the old Normans.

Couline vaut lolot  
Pipe au pommier  
Gerbe au boissey.  
Mon père bet bien,

Ma mère oco mieux,  
 Mon père à guichonnée,  
 Ma mère à coudronnée,  
 Et mei à terrinée.

Adieu Noë  
 Il est passé.  
 Couline vaut lolot,  
 Gerbe au boissey,  
 Pipe au pommier  
 Bieure et lait  
 Tout à planté.

Taupes et mulots  
 Sors de mon clos  
 Ou je te cas les os.  
 Barbaisioné  
 Si tu viens dans mon clos  
 Je te brule la barbe jusqu'aux os.

Adieu Noë  
 Il est passé;  
 Noë s'en va  
 Il viendra.  
 Pipe au pommier,  
 Gerbe au boissey,  
 Bieure et lait  
 Tout à planté.

It is impossible for any one not acquainted with the *patois* to translate this song. Of the first line, which recurs in the second stanza, I can make nothing. The rest, according to my interpretation, is as follows:—

*Couline vaut lolot.*

May every apple-tree produce a pipe (of cider),  
 Every sheaf a bushel (of corn).  
 My father drinks stoutly,  
 My mother still better,



My father a *guichonnée* (a large earthenware jug),  
My mother a *coudrouée* (another sort of large mug),  
And I a terrineful.

Farewell, Christmas!  
Christmas is past.  
*Couline vaut lolot.*  
A pipe to each apple-tree,  
Butter and milk,  
All in plenty.

Mole and field-mouse,  
Get out of my field,  
Or I will break thy bones.  
Barbaisioné (an evil spirit),  
If thou comest to my field  
I'll burn thy beard to the bone.

Farewell to Christmas!  
Christmas is going.  
It will come again.  
A pipe to each apple-tree,  
A bushel to each sheaf.  
Butter and milk  
All in plenty.

Antiquaries are of opinion that this song, and the whole ceremony, which consists in going through the fields with burning torches to render them more fertile, must be referred to the times of the Druids, or some other paganism. It certainly looks heathenish enough, and I shall therefore not contradict them. At any rate, according to this hypothesis, it is a proof how such popular songs are preserved for thousands of years; and it is unpardonable in antiquaries to bestow, as most of them do, their time and pains on a stone or a coin,

which after all is not of half so much importance as a song of this kind, when one is capable of duly appreciating it, and can compare it with those of other times and other nations. But this is a thing that has very seldom been thought of.

Good humour, an eye for the beauties of Nature, and sound common sense, are expressed in the proverbs that I have quoted. In the song and its object, on the other hand, is manifested a belief in the wonderful, and thus we are met by that contrast between sound sense and superstition which we have such frequent opportunity to remark in every country. When we hear those homely proverbs in which the Norman proclaims his dislike of the physician and the apothecary, in which he leaves the cure of diseases to the power of Nature, we are the more struck to find in almost the whole of Normandy the peasant attributing every illness to witchcraft, and sending for the conjuror to cure his family or his cattle. From time to time cases of this kind come before the courts, but it is not one in a hundred that has this issue. In Normandy it is only in the larger towns that the revolution has eradicated these stupid notions, and there but partially. I recollect having heard in Havre of the miraculous cures performed by a certain family upon persons bitten by mad dogs; and the narrators believed them as firmly as the gospel. In Bayeux there is a family which cures wens, as the kings of France formerly did, and as the British sovereigns cured the king's evil, by the

mere touch, and likewise the *carreau*, an obstruction of the mesentery, to which children are much subject.

In the Bessin the art of healing by miraculous means requires a particular study, and has its own *materia medica*. Fever is cured by putting a living spider in a nutshell and keeping it for nine days in the bosom. Whoever has too great an aversion to the insect to employ this remedy may repeat the following form: "Au nom du Saint Euxepère et de Sainte Honorine, arrière fièvre d'avant, fièvre d'arrière, fièvre printannière, fièvre quartaine, ago, superago, consummatum est." To this must be added three paternosters and three Ave Marias. *Probatum est*. Should this fail to afford relief, the formula is written upon parchment which has never before been used, and fastened to the left hand, where it is left for nine days, when the patient is certain to be cured or—dead; for not an herb that grows, not a form that was ever devised, can stay the advance of death.

Individual remedies are of a still more innocent nature, and it would seem as if many of them were invented merely to uphold the proverb which says:—

Qui court après le mière  
Court après la bière.

Thus for wounds received from falls a droll remedy is used—rats' dung dissolved in water. Mice fare worse; they are killed and cooked and

given to children to eat, as a cure for the whooping-cough. One would really suppose that some merry wag, taking advantage of the simplicity of the people, had persuaded them to have recourse to these ludicrous remedies with a view to preserve them from such as might be less innocent.

When cattle are taken ill, such cases are sure to be attributed to some witch or wizard. The affair is then more serious, and, be the complaint what it will, recourse is had to the following incantation : " St. John ! St. John ! St. John of Nicodemus ! in the name of St. Elisabeth, I conjure thee that this beast suffer no longer than the blessed Virgin when she bore our Lord Jesus Christ !" Add five pater-nosters and five Ave Marias, and how can St. John of Nicodemus withstand such a spell, if he has any gallantry !



## CHAPTER XXIII.

Falaise—The Castle—Bedchamber of Duke Robert the Magnificent—Prison of Arthur of Bretagne—Popular Song on the Birth of William the Conqueror—Amour of Duke Robert with Harlotte, a Tanner's Daughter—House reputed to have been the Dwelling of the Conqueror—Heroism of Women of Falaise—Extraordinary Execution—Messrs. Galleron and Travers; their efforts for the encouragement of agriculture and industry, and for diffusing popular instruction—Society formed for that purpose—Elementary Publications issued by it—State of the Schools—System of the French Government in regard to public instruction.

IN less than six hours you are carried from the grave of William the Conqueror to the spot on which his cradle stood. In travelling from the latter of these to the former, the tanner's bold grandson trod upon heaps of slain, and, wherever he set foot, the ground reeked with blood. The god of history has engraved upon his tomb-stone lessons that grin at us as if in scorn of the greatness of a great conqueror. Let us see whether the ruins of the castle that contained his cradle have their language also.

Falaise is now a country town of ten or eleven thousand inhabitants, who subsist partly by agri-

culture, partly by manufactures. The town is romantically situated on the side of a hill; the houses are old-fashioned, some of them built of wood and plaster. The streets are enlivened by clear, cool streams of water, without which they would look extremely dull and dismal.

My first inquiry, on alighting from the diligence, was the way to the castle. On the ground formerly inclosed by the walls of the castle and surrounded by its ruins stands the college of Caen. The noisy sports of the scholars, playing their youthful gambols, while two teachers walked to and fro in earnest conversation, were the welcome with which I was greeted amidst the ruins of the castle. And the violated grave, the broken tomb-stone, in Caen preach not a more impressive lesson than these schoolboys, playing on the spot where William the Conqueror first dreamed of his greatness.

A lofty door, opened by an enormous key, admits you into the inner enclosure of the castle. You then find yourself on the terrace, which may probably have served for tournaments and chivalrous exercises as well as for walking. Between this terrace, the castle, and the castle-wall, there is a kitchen garden.

At the end of the terrace was formerly a tower, now only a breastwork, in which is still to be seen the breach battered by Henry IV., and through which he penetrated into the castle and the town. This spot commands one of the finest views imaginable. Deep in the valley, at the foot of the

castle, lies a meadow surrounded by hills and rocks, the fresh verdure of which forms an extraordinary and most charming contrast with the rugged masses of the *falaise* and castle. Through this meadow winds a sportive stream, heightening the animation of the scene. Behind us is the castle, with its lofty Talbot Tower, and its black walls, gnawed by the tooth of Time; and opposite to this, on the other side of the valley and river, the *fulaise*, where hundreds and hundreds of rugged blocks of stone, thrown into the most singular groupes and shapes, form a ruin of a very different kind, and attest a revolution which must have happened thousands of years ago, and in which giants—the powers of Nature—combated for the mastery. Never did I behold in so small a compass—the whole view is scarcely a league in circumference—such striking contrasts brought together; contrasts which tell of the first revolutions of the globe in those masses of rock; of the still life of the first men, the golden age, in that meadow, that river; and of the iron age of our forefathers in that ruin beside us. This view gives us, without stirring a step from the spot, what we esteem ourselves lucky to find singly here and there in our peregrinations. It was long before I could take my eyes off it; and nothing but the impatience of my guide, who could not conceive how any one, close to the castle in which the Conqueror was born, could want to be gazing at the adjacent country, roused me from my reverie.

He then conducted me into the castle itself.



Four massive walls, with several windows and two or three niche-like closets constructed in the walls, are all that remains of the magnificence of Robert *le magnifique*. My guide pointed out the window, from which, according to the popular tradition, Robert first beheld his Harlotte, or Harlette, washing at the stream below. If at that distance he could have discovered and appreciated her beauty, he must indeed have had a pair of hawk's eyes. A nearly contemporary poet gives a more natural account of the matter; but more of that anon. Let us first look over the castle.

On the right of the above-mentioned window is the room in which, also according to popular tradition, William the Conqueror was begotten. If there was a bed in this apartment, as no doubt there was, there could scarcely have been room enough left to turn round; for the chamber of Robert *le magnifique* was not larger than that of the poorest scribbler who lodges in a mansarde. My cicerone next took me to a still smaller contiguous apartment, in which Arthur of Bretagne, nephew of King John, and like him a descendant of the Conqueror's, was confined. Thus, close to the cradle of the conqueror of England, is the prison of his descendant, reminding us that his own blood caused Normandy, his patrimony, to be ravished from his posterity. But this prison teaches us another lesson, namely that, in an age which we often proudly call the age of barbarism, a king could not find an executioner, and was obliged to stain his



own hands with the blood of his victim. John sent orders to his warriors at Falaise to murder Arthur, but they replied that they were soldiers, not executioners. The king, therefore, had his nephew removed to Rouen, and there, with his own hand, as it is believed, plunged a dagger into his heart. The Normans, shocked at so foul a murder, threw off their allegiance to the perpetrator, and thus became subjects of the king of France, as soon as he attacked Normandy in earnest. This circumstance affords a most striking proof of the sense of justice of the Normans.

From Arthur's prison my guide took me to the pinnacles of the tower built by Talbot, where one again enjoys a surprisingly beautiful prospect, embracing in a bird's-eye view the town and the whole surrounding country.

The history of Robert and William the Conqueror, and particularly that of Harlotte, the mother of the latter, is so intimately connected with the ruins of the castle, that it is but natural that it should still live in the memory of the people, and have furnished a theme for songs and traditions. In the first place, here is a song that is still heard occasionally at Falaise.

LA NAISSANCE DE GUILLAUME LE CONQUERANT.

RONDE.

*Air.*—La boulangère a des écus.

De Guillaume le conquérant  
Chantons l'historiette,  
Il naquit, cet illustre enfant,  
D'une simple amourette.

SONG ON WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR. 113

Le hasard fait souvent les grands. . . .

Vive le fils d'Arlette !

Normands,

Vive le fils d'Arlette !

Fille d'un simple pelletier

Elle était gentille

Robert, en galant chevalier,

Vint lui conter fleurette ;

L'amour égale tous les rangs,

Vive le fils d'Arlette !

Normands,

Vive le fils d'Arlette !

Falaise dans sa noble tour

Vit entrer la fillette,

Et c'est là que le dieu d'amour

Finit l'historiette.

Anglais, honorez ces amans,

Vive le fils d'Arlette !

Normands,

Vive le fils d'Arlette !

Guillaume assemble ses guerriers

Au son de la trompette :

L'olive embellit ses lauriers ;

La gloire fut complete :

Ah ! vivent de tels conquérants,

Vive le fils d'Arlette !

Normands,

Vive le fils d'Arlette !

I have mentioned above that, according to the popular tradition, Robert first espied Harlotte from his window and fell in love with her. An ancient *Poeme* tells the story in a different way. I subjoin a translation of it.\*

\* The Norman original text of Benoit de St. More is to be found in Frenaye's "Nouvelle Histoire de Normandie," p. 426, *et. seq.* I give the passage relative to Falaise from a French translation introduced into Galleron's "Histoire de Falaise."

“The brave Robert, duke of the Normans, dwelt in Falaise, a very beautiful, healthy, and pleasant place. One of his greatest foibles was his love for a damsel, whose history I will relate.

“One day, when he returned from the chase, he saw her in a little valley, where she, with several daughters of townspeople, was washing linen at a spring. She had her clothes for convenience, and, according to the custom of those who used to wash there, tucked up to below the knee. The day was fine, the weather warm, and her feet and legs displayed such beauty that the transported duke imagined their whiteness shamed snow and lilies, and love instantly took possession of his heart.

“The virgin daughter of a townsman was beautiful and amiable, and had been well and prudently brought up. She was fair, her brow and eyes were fine, her complexion was more delicate than roses and lilies, the expression of her face mild, open, without pride; her nose, mouth, and chin, were beautiful; her bosom and arms plump and finely formed: in short, she far surpassed all the other beauties of the country. All that one could say to describe her would fall far short of what she really was. The duke, who wished to possess her at any price, sent one of his knights and his trusty chancellor to demand her, directing the latter to promise the father so much that he could not refuse her, and to say that she should at first be loved with the warmest love, and afterwards given to some wealthy lord. The father, who was one of the richest in-



habitants of Falaise, at first refused her, and even considered the application as an insult. He meant to marry her to one whom he liked : several suitors had asked for her, and he would not for the world allow her to be the mistress of any man whatsoever.

“ Such was his determination, when one of his brothers, a holy personage, a very religious man, who had an hermitage in the wood of Gouffern, prevailed upon him to change it ; for he dissuaded him from his idea, prudent or imprudent, of concealing his daughter ; nay, he so wrought upon him by his counsels that he was ready to comply with the wishes and the will of the duke.

“ The young damsel, on her part, explained to him very sensibly what advantages he might derive from the circumstance. The matter was accordingly settled, and the night and the hour fixed for one of the days of the week. Meanwhile, the agitated damsel thought only how to appear before the duke in such a manner as would be well pleasing to him, and suitable to her condition and wealth. She therefore had a new dress made, neatly worked and fitting close, in order to set off her beauty. And when the appointed night arrived, the two messengers of the duke went to her to conduct her privily to the castle.

“ But this was not pleasing to the young damsel. And they said to her : ‘ Wrap yourself, fair one, in this linen cloak, and take care that no one sees you ; for your neighbours and the low people would not fail to speak lightly of you. To-morrow,



before the day dawns and the lark is singing, we will bring you back hither as secretly.'

" 'And is it so?' immediately replied the prudent damsel, who was not wanting in spirit, 'is it so? And if the duke send for me to enjoy my fair body, am I to go to him like a maid-servant or an out-cast? No! I will go to him, if it must be, but as a reputable person, as the daughter of a respectable man, in order to increase in honours and riches. Know that I fear nothing, and that every one may see me and what I do: and never will I do, from inclination, levity, or folly, any thing that people can find fault with. Besides, see if I can go on foot to the duke in this dress. Fetch your parade horses, I beg you; we shall then go the more conveniently?'

"The messengers, who found this language extremely sensible, did what she desired. She had covered her lovely body with a fine under-garment, put on over that a grey pelisse, fresh, soft, without folds, fitting tight to her waist and arms, and thrown over all a small, very elegant mantle in the best taste. Her long auburn hair was fastened up attractively by a riband and a fine silver net. Thus dressed, and looking more beautiful than she had ever done before, she mounted a horse, saluted her mother and her father, and then, overcome all at once with inward anxiety, she began to weep, so that her fair bosom was wet with her tears.

"Oh! had she been able to look into futurity, how great would then have been her joy! for since Hector, the hero of Troy, who was the son of Priam,

the world has not seen a greater prince than he who was begotten that night. Arthur was valiant; so was Charles the Great, the conqueror of Spain. But when you know the history of him whom I am about to celebrate, you will not say, I hope, that a more valiant prince ever lived. Thus God often permits the greatest advantages for the future to arise out of weakness. The duke had in truth taken to himself on this occasion an easy and compliant friend, instead of a wife, according to the laws; but it was afterwards shewn beyond a doubt that God loved and protected the issue of this connexion.

“Those who were conducting the damsel to the duke, after they had led her to the door of the castle, made her alight before it, then caused the postern to be opened, went in, and desired her to follow them. But she, more shrewd than simple, refused to stir another step, at which they were highly astonished. ‘Fair one,’ said they, ‘come on, be not afraid, the way is clear.’—‘O no, indeed I shall not, for that is neither right nor prudent,’ immediately replied the damsel. ‘Why, when the duke sends for me, is his door to be shut against me? Let it be opened, or he must give up all hope of possessing me. If he wishes to have me with him, it is not decorous to make me enter by this postern. God forbid, at least, that I should do so! To a certainty he must esteem me very lightly, as he treats me in this manner. Open the door, my good friends.’

“At these words, the sound sense and justice of which delighted the messengers, they hastened to

open the door to the damsel, and they led her forthwith to the vaulted chamber, which contained many images in gold and in colours. And there the duke, who was impatiently waiting for her, received her with great joy and great honour, and gave her his whole love."

I know not whether the narrator was a Norman, whether he borrowed his account from popular tradition, or whether he invented it himself. So much, however, is certain, that the conduct of Harlotte, as he represents it, is that of a genuine Norman woman. She is shrewd and prudent, and contrives to turn the sacrifice which she is ready to make to the very best account. The intervention of the reverend brother is also in perfect accordance with the times; for the people were then not such adepts in the quirks and quibbles of casuistry as not to need the aid of a spiritual adviser, when, as in this case, there was something to be done which was forbidden by the laws of religion. If the preceding narrative is really founded on fact, the clerical gentleman no doubt duly instructed his niece, and gave her lessons how she was to behave. In the Chronicle of Normandy we find a continuation of this account, which seems also to exhibit traces of the tuition of the hermit, who, it is to be presumed, was acquainted with the dreams recorded in the Old Testament. There the story of Robert's love for Harlotte is thus related:

"It so happened that the duke Robert was at Falaise. There he saw the daughter of a townsman, whose name was Arlette. This maiden was beau-



tiful, good, and graceful, and she pleased duke Robert so much that he wished to have her for his friend, and most respectfully demanded her from her father. The father at first refused to comply with his wish. The duke, however, besought him so earnestly, that, on account of the great love which he saw in the duke for his maiden daughter, he granted his consent, provided the maiden gave her's. He then spoke to her about the matter. She answered: 'Father, I am your child; you can command, and I am ready to do my duty as well as I can.' And when the duke was informed of this, it gave him great joy. And when night came, she was brought and conducted to the bed of the duke, and there left alone with him in the chamber..... When the duke had had his pleasure with her, and when they had conversed with one another as much and as long as they pleased, Arlette fell asleep, and the duke did not disturb her, and began to think of all sorts of things. And, while he was so thinking, the lady started and heaved a very deep sigh. And the duke drew her to him, and asked what was the matter. 'My lord,' said she, 'I have been dreaming, and dreamt that a tree grew out of my body up to the sky, and that all Normandy was covered by its shade.' 'Very good,' said the duke, 'be not afraid,' &c.

So much for the chronicles and the ancient poets.

In Falaise and the environs, the name of William the Conqueror is still in every body's mouth. The aged tell the children about him, and the boys re-



peat him in their sports. As I passed through the town, I observed a house on which his name was inscribed after this fashion :

MAISON  
DE  
GUILLAUME  
LE GRAND CONQUERANT.  
RICHARD  
DONNE À BOIRE ET À MANGER.

According to the popular notion, this house really was once the dwelling of William the Conqueror, and ancient records, in which it is mentioned as "manoir de Guillaume le conquerant," give great weight to this tradition. If we consider that his mother was only Robert's mistress, it will appear natural that she should have her separate house. If this were the case, the irony or the revenge of the god of history would be complete. The castle of his father, where he was begotten, is a ruin ; on the spot where he learned the exercises of arms, the beadle of a college plants cabbages ; in the house where he himself and his mother dwelt, a busy cook entertains his customers, sturdy labourers and husbandmen ; and his tomb was destroyed by the rage of a people driven to insurrection. This is an inscription such as was never yet engraved on triumphal arch or grave-stone, and which, for him who can read it, resolves itself into a curse pronounced by Chance or Providence.

The history of Normandy frequently exhibits the

most extraordinary complications in the lives of the men whose names it has preserved. Liberty and its institutions fostered in the inhabitants of this country, so long as it was not under the control of any other, an energy and a spirit of independence which are incessantly reminding us of the heathen hardihood of their ancestors. *There* existed *men*: for no scourge could train them up to schoolboys. Hence that force of will, that strength of character, which impart such high dramatic interest to the history of independent Normandy; which show us how a handful of Normans, driven ashore by tempest, overthrew kingdoms and founded new ones; how an exile, expatriated for his turbulence, could carve out with his sword a new inheritance in distant lands. In the history of Falaise we meet also with a fugitive, who, driven from distant lands by the foes of his nation, found an asylum in Normandy. But he was not a Norman; he was not a son of a free, high-spirited, youthful people — he was the last scion of a decayed stock, which a new race had cut down because it stood in their way. A Palæologus fled, after the fall of Constantinople, to Normandy, and was there appointed, by way of charity, to the government of Falaise.

The very women of Normandy would have had a right to ask him, “Why didst thou not perish under the walls of Constantinople?” for they furnished frequent occasion to admire their valour. I have often adverted to this subject, and must not pass over in silence the heroism of two women of Falaise,

who distinguished themselves during the siege of their town by Henry IV.

The king's troops poured through the breach into the town, but here commenced a most obstinate conflict, in which the women took a prominent part. There a young female of Falaise was seen fighting with the greatest intrepidity by the side of her lover, and resisting a host of foes. At length, a mortal stroke stretched her lover at her feet. In vain did the king's soldiers strive to persuade her to desist from the fight: her courage was only inflamed to fury by the fall of her lover, and she rushed with redoubled strength upon the assailants, till at last she too received a mortal blow, and, sinking upon the body of her bridegroom, expired.

A second female, whom the people called "*la grande Eperonnière*," distinguished herself in such a manner at one of the gates as to attract the notice of the king, who sent for her after the place was taken. She went without fear into his presence, and even there did not forget what she owed to the town and to her fellow-citizens. She besought the king to spare at least the old men, the children, and the women. Henry, touched by her heroism and noble sentiments, permitted her to retire with her treasures, and the persons whom she wished to save, into one of the streets, which he ordered to be closed. This street is still called, in memory of the circumstance, *Camp-fermant*, or *Camp-fermé*.

As the history of Falaise furnishes such striking instances of the heroism of the Norman women, so it



exhibits a curious evidence of the litigiousness of the Norman men. In the year 1386, a sow ate part of the child of a day-labourer of Falaise named Janet. This accident reached the ears of the judge, who condemned the animal to suffer publicly the penalty of retaliation, as prescribed by law. The face and one arm of the child had been devoured : the sow was mutilated in the same manner, and then hanged by the executioner in the public place, amidst a concourse of people. The judge presided at the execution on horseback, with a feather in his hat. The father was forced to attend, by way of punishment, for not taking proper care of his child. The culprit, when brought to the gallows, was dressed like a man, wore a waistcoat, breeches, and gloves, and a human mask before her snout.

The annals of criminal justice cannot certainly produce many such trials and executions ; and I think that the fondness of the ancient Normans for litigation needs no further evidence than this sow.

But enough of the Falaise of yesterday ; let us say a few words concerning the Falaise of to-day.

History has hitherto rarely recorded any name the owner of which has not compelled her to dip her pen in blood. Perhaps a different time may come ; but, when I bethink me of the enthusiasm which Napoleon still excites, it seems to me that this time is still at a great distance from us. The Falaise of to-day possesses two men who will sink into oblivion, because they have been content with the sphere which chance has allotted to them, and because in



this sphere they have employed every moment of their lives in labouring for the welfare of their fellow-citizens.

Falaise has recently been making great progress. Its agriculture has been improved, its industry extended, and above all, instruction has struck deeper root in the people. It is to two men in particular — there may be others with whom I am not acquainted, because they labour more in private than these two—that Falaise is indebted for this advancement. One of them is Galleron, procureur du roi, the other, Travers, director of the College. Both take advantage of their position solely to do good ; and to this all their time is devoted. The increase of the schools in the country, and the improvement and greater efficiency of those in the town, are their work. A town library, which has existed but a few years, and contains several thousand volumes, was founded by M. Galleron, who induced upwards of a hundred of the townspeople to contribute a yearly subscription of ten francs. The town gave the rooms requisite for the purpose ; and the preservation and increase of this library depend upon the contributions of the citizens.

For these few years past an “ Association pour le Progrès de l'Agriculture, de l'Industrie, et de l'Instruction,” formed at the instigation of the two gentlemen above-mentioned, has published an “ Annuaire de l'Arrondissement de Falaise,” compiled and chiefly written by themselves, and calculated entirely for the people, pointing out to them in the

simplest tone the improvements that may be made in the husbandry, manufactures, and industry of the district, combating their prejudices, and giving them instruction. Since 1830 there were at Falaise three societies; a "Société Littéraire," a "Société d'Agriculture," and that just mentioned, which, at the instigation of those gentlemen, have united, in order that with their joint force they may operate the more effectively. For the extension of public instruction, they have brought about monthly meetings of teachers in the circumjacent villages, which are always attended by one or other of those officials for the purpose of instructing and encouraging the teachers by deed and by advice. And they need such encouragement, but more of that anon.

Their main object, however, seems to be to give a practical direction to the system of instruction. They felt how far it is from sufficient for ordinary life to acquire a slight proficiency in reading, writing, and arithmetic; they therefore set about devising means for initiating the children in other necessary and useful branches of knowledge. They called for assistance upon all those in Falaise who were capable of furthering the progress in this or the other science, induced them to write elementary works in a language intelligible to youth, and got them lithographed. I have seen a collection of these, which might serve as a model for all schools. A M. Alphonse de Brebisson has in this manner described and delineated the trees, their wood, and their fruit, and also the principal plants that grow

in the environs of Falaise, and thus put a popular system of botany into the hands of both masters and scholars. Another part contains the "Principles of Religion and Morality Illustrated by Examples." A third, by M. Galleron, gives a "History of the Arrondissement of Falaise;" a fourth contains a "History of Music and the Elements of that Science, by M. Huteil, teacher of music; in two other parts, M. St. Ange-Plet, director of the Ecole mutuelle, gives a "Popular Geometry;" lastly, M. Lerant, ancien avocat, juge de paix at Falaise, the "Principles of Legislation," in which we find the duties of children to their parents and of parents to their children, the duties of guardians to their wards and vice versa, and those of citizens in general to the state, presented in a clear and comprehensive manner.

I wish my limits permitted me to do more than merely quote the titles: but what I have already stated is sufficient to afford an idea of the efforts making by philanthropists in Falaise. Ought they not to suffice to raise up imitators?

I should never have done were I to enter more into detail. The following general observations, moreover, will lead me back often enough to the men who have made the moral and intellectual welfare of their fellow-citizens the study of their lives.

With the revolution of July commenced a new era for France. In the three days, the mind threw off its fetters more completely than the body, and



then began to move free and unrestrained. One of the immediate consequences of this revolution was that a desire for instruction was awakened in the people, and that in all quarters there started up men who felt a vocation to supply that want to the best of their ability. The result for Falaise may be summed up in a few figures. In 1830 there existed in this town but one school of the *frères ignorants*, and the number of their scholars amounted to 180. In the year after the revolution of July, a second school of mutual instruction was established, and soon obliged the *frères* to make very material reforms in their's. At present this second school numbers 220 scholars, and that of the *frères* 300. The proportion between the scholars in 1830 and 1837 was as 180 to 520.

But this was not sufficient for the promoters of illumination. The neglected state in which the war-loving Empire and the light-hating Restoration left the people, caused a great number of the older persons of the lower classes to be brought up without any education whatever; the necessity of making a provision for these was felt, and thus there were established in Falaise gratuitous schools for labouring people in the different suburbs, where 140 persons of the working classes are daily receiving instruction, and where father and son may frequently be seen sitting side by side and mutually exciting and encouraging one another. A statistical report of the criminal jurisprudence for the arrondissement of Falaise affords numerical evidence that instruc-



tion promotes morality and integrity, if such evidence were at all necessary. In a total of 62,349 inhabitants, this report gives

for 1829, 121 prosecutions, of which 43 were for theft.

„ 1830, 158	„	„	25	„
„ 1831, 114	„	„	27	„
„ 1832, 114	„	„	36	„
„ 1833, 93	„	„	24	„
„ 1834, 110	„	„	24	„
„ 1835, 93	„	„	23	„

The decrease of theft is particularly striking, as this argues an improvement in the material condition of the inhabitants of the arrondissement.

In the first years after the revolution of July, the government and the chambers followed the general impulse, and did their utmost for the diffusion and improvement of public instruction. M. Guizot's law of the 28th of June, 1833, in spite of its blunders, shows at any rate the earnestness with which the government set about this improvement of the public instruction. Since that time, various changes have taken place. The fundamental idea of a government must necessarily carry itself out in its remotest consequences. The system of M. Guizot and the government, or rather of the government and therefore of M. Guizot, recognises only the wealthier inhabitants of the country, the landed proprietors, as really citizens of the state. The consequence of this system is of course the moral dependence of all who are not citizens of the state.

on those who become such by being electors, or eligible. This dependence cannot take place and last, unless there is really a moral superiority on the one hand, and a moral inferiority on the other, which is not possible in a truly enlightened and polished nation. The government and the partisans of its system cannot therefore be friends of general enlightenment, as this would render their system impossible. Till the year 1835, this was felt by individual adherents of the government; after the trials in April they knew it, and were not backward to say it, as the papers of the doctrinaires have often enough shown.

Since that time, public instruction has every where met with obstacles, especially in the country and in the smaller country-towns. In these, in general, a few opulent proprietors, who are devoted, soul and body, to the government, who are guided by its agents and its journals, possess the exclusive influence over the communal councils and the people; and hence it is that, as soon as they have received the watchword from Paris, they act in their localities agreeably to the wishes entertained in Paris, and often go much farther than they in Paris dare venture to do. In every town, in every village in France, down to the very smallest and meanest, where some other party has not the preponderance, this influence asserts its sway. For the arrondissement of Falaise the following figures again speak plainly enough. Till the year 1835 there was an advancing improvement; it then became stationary, and a re-

trograde movement succeeded. The statement for that and the next year is as follows :—

	1835	1836
Communal schools .....	64	67
Private schools .....	12	11
Female teachers .....	19	21
Number of children of both sexes		
attending the schools in winter	4729	4600
„ „ in summer	3292	3139
„ receiving no instruction	690	830
School-children paying in winter ...	3431	3211
„ not paying „	1298	1399

In the same year that the progress of public instruction ceased at Falaise, and a retrogression became perceptible, the statistics of the administration of justice exhibited an increase of crimes. While only 93 legal prosecutions were necessary in 1835, we find 101 in 1836, and instead of 23 thefts no fewer than 36. This is a sign of the times that our calculating age ought at least to understand.

All these facts I have found in the *Annuaire* of the Society for the Improvement of Agriculture, Industry, and Public Instruction, of 1836 and 1837. The latter contains this passage :—“The majority of the municipal councillors, though composed of citizens, who ought above all to encourage public instruction, have shown themselves hostile to it; some refusing a school of any kind; others cavilling with the master till he resigned his office; and others again, and these form the greater number, fixing the master's salary so low as to discourage

men whose usefulness nothing but ill-will or the most deplorable blindness can refuse to acknowledge."

Methinks this is enough to confirm the above views concerning the influence of the principles prevailing in a government. If the government were seriously intent on progressing, not one municipal council in a thousand would oppose it. In fact, throughout all France public instruction became more and more diffused so long as the government was seriously disposed to encourage it.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

Vire—The Castle—Cloth Manufactures—Comeliness of the Women—Lecture on their Dress—Fate of the Lecturer—Olivier Basselin, a minstrel of the Fourteenth Century; specimens of his Songs—Jean le Houx; specimens of his Compositions—Flers; tradition respecting the origin of a Lake in its Environs—Evreux; historical traits connected with it—Abortive Attempt to introduce the Inquisition—Ecclesiastical Reforms of bishop Claude de Sainte—Anecdote of his Successor—Anecdote illustrative of the Character of the People.

VIRE is a small town of 10,000 inhabitants, on the river of the same name, in the department of Calvados. It was formerly the chief town of the Bocage. The environs of the place, which is seated on a hill, are picturesque: the Vire and the Virène, which unite here, form beautiful, verdant, animated valleys, in which the clack of the paper-mills and the operations of the cloth manufacture alternate with the repose of the wooded hills.

In the ancient castle of Vire there are at present the library, the hotel de ville, and in the courtyard a fountain, to which washer men, as well as women, resort in great numbers. For those who are fond of such things, these are remarkable enough. At times, unfortunately, I am better pleased with the

tattle of washerwomen than with the learned jabber of libraries. In regard to antiquities too I am rather difficult; and, even if they were built in Adam's time, I could pass them with indifference, if they have no story to tell.

The cloth manufactures in the environs are not precisely the best in France; nay, formerly they did a great deal of business, because they furnished cloth of such bad quality that no other manufacture in France could compete with it. In general, to be sure, bad cloth is not in great request; and the Revolution alone could go so far in its plebeian stoicism as to prefer that of Vire to any other. The republic was poor and economical, and therefore purchased the cheapest cloth that could be got for its soldiers. The people of Vire sent cloth to the Cisalpine army, and thus the sans-culottes got culottes and the cloths of Vire the name of Cisalpins. Subsequently, when republican simplicity was superseded by imperial luxury, the cloth-trade of Vire declined, because the manufacturers of that place, accustomed to make a cheap and bad commodity, could not for some time get into the way of producing a better.

The race of people in all Lower Normandy, especially in the smaller towns, is very robust, and the women are mostly good-looking. These are chiefly engaged in household occupations, while the men almost exclusively pursue the labours of agriculture. The former are consequently less sunburnt, and have in general handsome hands and feet. At Vire you

meet with scarcely any but comely women, frequently having fair complexions, but mostly brunettes. A fresh healthy colour, lively and expressive eyes, a good figure of middling height, and a light easy gait, give them an appearance that is really charming; and they are not only attractive in person, but mostly of a lively cheerful disposition, unaffected and intelligent in conversation, and excellent housewives. Like those of Germany, they take a particular pride in their linen, which is therefore their first and their last care.

But they seem to have inherited something from the French. Their dress is at present plain and neat, and I must confess that I could perceive in it no more fondness for fashion and coquetry than in that of any other women. But it appears that they could not always have thought and acted as they do now. In a history of their country and their town,\* I met with the following passage:

“What I shall say of it [the dress of the women] generally is that, as the women of former times were decent and chaste, and prided themselves on being grave and modest, so those of the present day strive by all means in their power to appear rude and voluptuous. We no longer live in the times when ladies of quality appeared with girdles like those of cordeliers. Their garments were as wide and thick as those of the women of our days are scanty and light, and so fine that at every motion the contours of the body are so exactly defined as to

\* Seguin, *Essai sur l'histoire de l'industrie du Bocage*. Vire, 1810.



leave nothing to be imagined. Scarcely do they cover the bosom with a very light transparent veil, or a sort of collar, which they call *point-à-jour*, and which, while covering all, conceals nothing; so that, if they do not display all their charms to the view, it is because the least scrupulous men, who are content to rally them at present, would be absolutely shocked. Besides, it is not yet the fashion. Many even carry their impudence so far as to come into our temples without caps, and their hair bristling like furies!" Oh! the wretches!

"After disgracing the dress of women, they have also prostituted that of men. We have seen them successively adopting hats, great-coats, jackets, waistcoats, boots, nay, even buttons!"

Atrocious! Well might M. Seguin express his indignation! The impious jades even wore buttons! "Would to God," proceeds the gallant combatant of women's buttons, "that the ancient laws were still in force, and that those, whether hes or shes, who wear indecent dresses, were obliged to go to Rome to obtain absolution, which could only be granted by the sovereign pontiff. But I doubt very much, whether the sovereign pontiff would ever have granted them absolution, unless they had previously subjected their flesh to severe castigation."

At this lesson of repentance the people of Vire felt grievously nettled, and as M. Seguin had attacked the manufacturers as well as the women, and charged them with making bad cloth, a storm burst one morning over his head. Men and women re-



solved to seize the traducer of his country, and M. Seguin deemed it advisable to take to his heels, like the hero Æneas. I dare say the Normans of both sexes would have forgiven without hesitation all his other treasons; but to talk of sending the women to Rome to obtain absolution, and the men to school to their neighbours to learn to make cloth, was too dire an offence. M. Seguin was hanged, poor fellow, after a very summary trial, and then they made an auto-da-fé, and burned the heretic with all due ceremony, that is to say, in effigy. How I should like to have seen this formidable riot! The ladies of Vire, attacked in the tenderest point, their caps, and gowns, and petticoats, showed, no doubt, a becoming spirit on the occasion. Upon the whole, however, I should hardly have given the people of Vire credit for so violent a proceeding, for they are a kindly race; and who knows but the whole affair may have been rather jocose than serious. At any rate, it furnishes a confirmation of a peculiarity in the character of the Lower Normans already noticed in treating of Caen not to suffer any one to pry into their domestic concerns. Let every body sweep before his own door, is their maxim, against which M. Seguin had grievously sinned, for he had not only talked about what others did, but written, printed, and published—ay published it—think of that!

I made too short a stay at Vire to have it in my power to be more explicit concerning the state of society there; but two old popular minstrels have left striking monuments in the strains which they

composed for their townspeople in former times. I have more than once remarked that the Normans of old were addicted to song, and that even at the present day they still furnish evidence of this disposition in their poets.

Olivier Basselin lived in the middle of the fourteenth century in the vicinity of Vire. He was the proprietor of a water-mill, but he seems to have cared very little about the water or the mill either, for he was a minstrel, and of course a foe to water. This enmity was carried so far, that the mill was at times neglected on account of it; and his relatives were at length obliged to consign the jovial and thirsty miller and his affairs to the care of trustees, which seems to have given him no particular concern. Basselin was the first plebeian who, after the clergy in their psalms, and the gentry in their love-ditties, had contrived to keep to themselves for some centuries a monopoly of song, raised his rather rude voice. His predecessors had so worn out the subjects of the blessed Virgin and their ladye-love, that it was quite a relief to hear once more a jolly drinking song. And Basselin sang :

Nous sommes armez comme il faut,  
A l'arme! à l'assault, à l'assault!  
Nous sommes armez comme il faut!  
Chascun monstre ce qu'il sait faire.

La trompette a sonné bien haut,  
A l'arme, à l'assault, à l'assault!  
La trompette a sonné bien haut  
Encor premier nous faut il boire.  
Nous sommes armez comme il faut,  
Chascun monstre ce qu'il sait faire!

Nous en aurons le cœur plus chaud,  
 A l'arme ! à l'assault, à l'assault !  
 Nous en aurons le cœur plus chaud,  
 Et vaincrons mieux nos adversaires.  
 Nous sommes armez comme il faut,  
 Chacun monstre ce qu'il sait faire.

A un j'ai fait faire un beau sault,  
 A l'arme ! à l'assault, à l'assault !  
 A un j'ai fait faire un beau sault  
 Vous en ferez en la manière.  
 Nous sommes armez comme il faut,  
 Chacun monstre ce qu'il sait faire.

These were strains of a kind and in a tone that had become very rare, and that were heard at most perhaps in the well supplied convent, from the lips of a jolly priest, who, in case one of the profane chanced to approach the sanctuary, immediately folded his hands and devoutly said, "In nomine Dei patris et filii. Amen!" But Basselin sang his song in broad day, taught it his neighbours, and they sang along with him.

After this spirited call upon his fellow-combatants to storm the bottle, one has no scruple to take his word for it that he was a genuine toper. But he himself tells us that he carried about him the distinctive mark of the boon companion ; for he thus sings his nose :

Quand mon nez deviendra de couleur rouge ou perse,  
 [Je] Porteray les couleurs que cherit ma maitresse.  
 Le vin rend le teint beau.  
 Vaut il pas mieux avoir la couleur rouge et vive,  
 Riche de beau rubis, que pasle et chétive,  
 Ainsi qu'un buveur d'eau ?

His philosophy of life and his politics are expounded in the following :

He ! qu'avons-nous affaire  
Du Turc et du Sophy !  
Don ! Don !  
Pourvu que j'ai à boire  
De grandeurs je d'y fi,  
Don ! Don !  
Trinque, seigneur, le vin est bon,  
Hoc acuit ingenium.

Qui song en vin ou vigne  
Et un présage heureux,  
Don ! Don !  
Le vin à qui rechigne  
Rend le cœur tout joyeux  
Don ! Don !  
Trinque, seigneur, le vin est bon,  
Hoc acuit ingenium.

Mechant est qui le brouille,  
Je parle aux taverniers,  
Don ! Don !  
Le breuvage à grenouille  
Ne doit estre aux celliers,  
Don ! Don !  
Trinque, seigneur, le vin est bon,  
Hoc acuit ingenium.

Que ce vin on ne coupe,  
Ainçois qu'on boire net,  
Don ! Don !  
Je prie toute la troupe  
De vider le godet,  
Don ! Don !  
Trinque, seigneur, le vin est bon,  
Hoc acuit ingenium.

Nothing could keep him from his bottle, and even when Vire was besieged, he pursued his



course undisturbed, like the philosopher of old,  
and sang :—

Tout à l'entour de nos remparts  
Les ennemis sont en furie !  
Sauvez nos tonneaux, je vous prie !  
Prenez plutôt de nous, soudards,  
Tout ce dont vous aurez envie  
Sauvez nos tonneaux, je vous prie.

Nous pourrions après en buvant  
Chasser notre mélancolie.  
Sauvez nos tonneaux, je vous prie,  
L'ennemi qui est si devant,  
Ne nous veut faire courtoisie,  
Vidons nos tonneaux, je vous prie.

Au moins s'il prend notre cité,  
Qu'il n'y trouve plus que la lie,  
Vidons nos tonneaux, je vous prie,  
Dussions nous marcher de côté  
Ce bon cildre n'espargnons pas.  
Vidons nos tonneaux, je vous prie.

His physic was of the same kind :

On dit qu'il (wine) nuit aux jeux, mais seront ils les maîtres,  
La vin est guérison  
De mes maux ; j'aime mieux perdre les deux fenêtres  
Que toute la maison.

Sometimes he was bolder and made game of  
the scholars :

Certes: hoc vinum est bonus,  
Du mauvais latin ne vous chaille.  
Le bien congru n'était ce jus  
Et tout ne voudroit rien qui vaille.  
Escolier j'appris que bon vin  
Aide bien au mauvais latin.

Cette sentence pratiquant  
 De latin je n'appris guère  
 Y pensant estre assez sçavant  
 Puisque bon vin aimoy à boire.  
 Lorsque mauvais vin on a bu,  
 Latin n'est bon, fust-il congru.

Fi du latin, parlons françois,  
 Je m'y reconnais davantage,  
 Je veux boire une bonne fois  
 Car voici un maistre breuvage,  
 Certes, si j'en beuvay souvent  
 Je deviendray fort eloquent.

That he knew enough of the Bible to undergo  
 an examination in the catechism he proves in  
 these lines:

Adam, c'est chose très notoire  
 Ne nous eut mis en tel dangier  
 Si au lieu du fatal mangier  
 Il se fust plustost pris à boire.

But the jolly tippler could sing of love as well as  
 wine; witness the following ballad:

En un gardin d'ombrage tout couvert,  
 Au chaud du jour ay trouvé Madeleine,  
 Qui près le pied d'un sycomore vert,  
 Dormait au bord d'une claire fontaine:  
 Son lit estait de thym et margoleine.  
 Son tetin frais n'estait pas bien caché  
 D'amour touché,  
 Pour contempler sa beauté souveraine  
 Incontinent je m'en suis aproché,  
 Sus, sus, qu'on se reveille  
 Voici vin excellent,  
 Qui fait lever l'oreille,  
 Il fait mal qui n'en prend,

Je n'eus pouvoir, si belle la voyant  
 De m'abstenir de baizotter sa bouche,  
 Si bien qu'enfin la belle s'esveillant,  
 Me regardant avec un œil farouche,  
 Me dit ces mots : Biberon ne me touche  
 Tu n'est pas digne avec moi d'esprouver

Le jeu d'aimer,  
 Belle fillette à son aise ne couche  
 Avec celui qui ne fait qu'yvroguer.  
 Sus, sus, qu'on se reveille,  
 Voici vin excellent,  
 Qui fait lever l'oreille,  
 Il fait mal qui n'en prend.

Je lui reponds : Ce n'est deshonneur  
 D'aimer le vin, une chose si bonne.  
 Vostre bel œil entretient en chaleur,  
 Et le bon vin en santé ma personne.  
 Pour vous aimer faut-il que j'abandonne  
 Le soin qu'on doit avoir de sa santé ?

Fi de beauté  
 Que son amant de déplaisir guerdonne,  
 Au lieu du bien qu'il avait mérité.  
 Sus, sus, qu'on se reveille,  
 Voici vin excellent,  
 Qui fait lever l'oreille,  
 Il fait mal qui n'en prend.

J'aime bien mieux l'ombre d'un cabaret  
 Et du bouchon la taverne vineuse,  
 Que cil qui est en un beau jardinnet.  
 La belle alors me répond depiteuse,  
 Tu ne m'est bon, cherche une autre amoureuse.  
 Puisque par toy j'ay perdu mes amours

Toujours ! Toujours !  
 Contre l'amour et le soif rigoureux  
 Que j' sois, bon vin, armé de ton secours.  
 Sus, sus, qu'on se reveille,  
 Voici vin excellent,  
 Qui fait lever l'oreille,  
 Il fait mal qui n'en prend.

I subjoin another song or two, not only as still more strongly characteristic of the merry toper, but also as calculated to convey a tolerably high idea of his poetic talent—in the 14th century, be it recollected.

Quand je suis sans verre et breuvaige  
C'est sans coq un limaçon,  
Sans livrée c'est un plaige,  
C'est un écolier sans leçon.

C'est un chasseur sans sa trompe,  
Sans braquette un lansquenet,  
C'est un navire sans pompe,  
C'est un berger sans flageolet.

C'est un soudart sans panache,  
C'est sans fifre un tambourin,  
C'est un charpentier sans hache,  
C'est un orfèvre sans burin.

Sans vin je perds contenance  
C'est ce qui mieux me convient,  
Comme au cavalier sa lance,  
Et la baguette à un sergent.

Je vous annonce la guerre,  
Pour l'amour de mon amy,  
Que voici dedans ce verre  
Je ne boiroy point à demy,

---

Boire autant de fois du bon  
Qu'a de lettres nostre nom  
Cela guarit nostre vie  
De soïn et melancolie.

J'en veuil avoir le cœur net  
Versez donc dans ce godet,



Sur ce cildre d'excellence  
J'en voy faire l'experience.

Mon nom est trop court vrayment  
Veu ce breuvaige excellent,  
J'y voudrais bien encore mettre  
A tout le nom une lettre.

Si le boire n'est pas bon  
Jean simplement j'aurais nom,  
Mais si ce breuvage idoyne,  
Mon nom sera Marc Antoine.

Basselin's songs are sufficiently remarkable in a literary point of view, especially when we consider the period in which they were composed. He was the creator of the drinking song in France, and moreover the father of the Vaudeville, the ancestor of M. Scribe. Basselin called his pieces after the place where he sang them, Vaudevires, which time has transformed into Vaudevilles. Some, however, assert that the Vaudevilles are much more ancient, and that their name is derived from *voix des villes*; but the greater number of French literati do not question Basselin's paternity.

But these poems are likewise of consequence as illustrating the character of the old Normans. Basselin was one of the people, and, sprung from the people, it was to the people that he sang his pieces. Most of these are songs for the table, in which the whole company joined, plying the glass the while. This we perceive in most of them at the first glance. In the following this popular practice is plainly expressed:—

C'est assez ! troupe honorable,  
De ces gentils chants virois,  
Il faut se lever de table,  
Le reste en un autre fois.

Car peut-estre  
Que le maistre  
Qui nous assemble ceans  
N'ose dire  
Le martyre  
Et le mal que lui font les dents.  
Sauvant incommodité  
Provient d'avoir trop chanté.

Mais il est trop volontaire  
Pour avoir le cœur marry  
D'avoir vu la bonne chère  
Que nous avons fait chez lui.  
Monsieur l'hoste  
Voyez, j'oste  
Mon bonnet honestement  
On me prie  
Que je die  
Qu'on vous rend grace humblement.  
Mais si le vin reste au pot  
Sommes encor de l'écot.

Faites en laver la bouche  
A quelques uns d'entre nous,  
Avant qu'un varlet y touche,  
Puisque tant depend de nous ;  
Je ne cure,  
Je vous jure,  
Jamais ma bouche autrement.  
Nostre hostesse  
Je vous laisse  
Mille mercis en payement.  
Cecy serait esventé  
J'en boy à vostre santé.

J'ai ouy dire à ma grande mère,  
 Toujours des vieux on apprend,  
 Que de la goutte dernière  
 La bonne chère depend.  
     Bonne femme  
     Que ton ame  
 Puisse estre au ciel en repos !  
     J'ay envie  
     Si j'ai vie  
 D'ensuivre bien tes propos.  
 Quand sur le bon vin je suis  
 J'en laisse moins que je puis.

Jean Chapelain, an old *romancier* of that time, says, concerning the custom of the *rondes de table* in Normandy : —

Usaige est en Normandie  
 Que qui hebergiez est qu'il die  
 Fable ou chanson à son hoste,

and thus proves that Basselin was not the only minstrel of his time, but that every guest sang his landlord a song or told him a story, a practice that carries us back to the manners and customs of the North. But the fact that we still possess these songs is the most striking proof of the fondness of the ancient Normans for song, that the compositions of the thirsty wine-bibber of Normandy were adopted by his countrymen, and by them transmitted down to us in spite of time and events. It was not till a century later that a countryman of Basselin's, his successor in the priesthood to the god of wine, Jean le Houx, of Vire, wrote them down from the lips of the people.

Le Houx had as strong an antipathy to water as Basselin himself :—

L'eau ne fait que mal au ventre,  
 Quel bien fait elle aux gosiers  
 Que ne fait pas aux souliers  
 Et bottes, quand elle y entre.

He was an advocate, and as Basselin left his mill to its fate so did Le Houx his office, that he might drink and sing without molestation. But, while Basselin had to do only with his relatives and his trustees, the poor advocate fared infinitely worse. The clerical guardians of the people took offence at his songs; they regarded them as an invasion of their privileges, and condemned them to the flames, and the poet to a pilgrimage to Rome to obtain absolution for the heinous mortal sin. What would M. Seguin say to this?

Le Houx had attempted to defend his songs in a song :—

On les a censurez,  
 Les pauvres voux de-vires;  
 Un tas de rechingez  
 Ne cessent de medire.  
 Veulent ces morfondus  
 Nous empecher de rire?  
 Ils font les entendus  
 Et ne peuvent rien dire.

Qui joyeux et gaillard  
 Chantant ne boit du pire  
 Vaud mieux qu'un vieux mulard  
 Qui toujours est en ire.



C'est du vin des ceans  
Que vous voyez reluire  
Gage qu'il est dedans  
Pourvu que je le tire.

And again :—

Douces chansons, à tort on vous blasonne,  
Beaux airs pour boire, à qui fait vous mal ?  
En collaudant un breuvage loyal  
On ne fait tort ni dommage à personne.

The clergy, however, condemned him in spite, and indeed on account, of the defence, and the thirsty singer, a pious Christian, took up the pilgrim's staff and journeyed to Rome. But he could not leave his dry throat and his fondness for song at home. Even by the way he thus sang :—

Voicy tous gens du courage  
Lesquels s'en vont en voyage  
Jusque par delà des monts  
Faire ce pelerinage  
Tous boire nous ne pourrons.  
Que la bouteille on n'oublie !  
En regrettant Normandie,  
A l'ombre nous nous seoirons,  
Si le chemin nous ennuye  
L'un à l'autre nous boirons.

Beuvons ! desja je me lasse,  
Un chascun sa calebasse  
Remplira, par ces chemins  
En disant : Donnez de grace  
A boire à ces pelerins.  
Compagnon vide la tienne,  
Ainsi que j'ai fait la mienne !  
Quelque chance nous viendra.  
Mais que la soif nous reprenne  
Qui nos flacons remplira ?

Le Houx was an incorrigible sinner, and I cannot imagine how absolution could be granted to him. So much is certain, that there was no amendment in him, for on his return home the old toper thus sang :—

Tous ces vers biberons ne veulx desavouer,  
Advortons que j'ai faits en majeure allegresse  
Quoique je n'eusse lors une ame beuvresse,  
Mais on fait souvent mal en se pensant jouer.

Je crains que quelques uns ne veulent en user  
Pour servir de pretext à leur gourmande vie;  
Ces vers ne pecheront, mais bien ivrognerie,  
Car de tout autre chose on peut bien abuser.

Je retracte pourtant les chansons qui fairont  
Scandale aux scrupuleux, et qui, sans les redire,  
Un chascun les censure et bannisse de Vire,  
Blasant avec l'auteur ceux qui les chanteront.

Moi meme j'en ai honte avec un repentir  
Je voudray que jamais elles n'eussent prie vie,  
Mais elles out deja embue la patrie  
Malgré moi on les chante et me faut le souffrir.

Je ne laisseray pas de hanter mes amis  
Sans faire toutes fois exces sur le breuvage  
Contre le mauvais temps leur donnant bon courage,  
Et le souhaitant tel comme il etait jadis.

Je vay boire autant pour finir ces chansons,  
Lesquels ne sont pas au gré de tout le monde,  
Mais quel dommage en a tout homme qui en gronde,  
Si sans haine et sans mal nous nous rejouissons !

Verily the fox may shed his coat, but he cannot lay aside his cunning !

Since I know that even the innocent songs of Basselin and his successor were persecuted as heretical in Normandy, condemned as heretical by cowed hypocrites and burned, I join the more cordially in the sentiment of the honest and straightforward Luther:—

Who loves not woman, verse, and song,  
Remains a fool his whole life long.

Five leagues from Vire, between that place and Argentan, is situated the little town of Flers, in the department of the Orne. Near it is a wood, in which is a pond, or, if you please, a small lake. The spot is silent and sequestered, and the shade of the tall trees that overhang the water gives it an appearance of extraordinary solemnity. Hence a poetic people could not pass it by unnoticed.

“Many, many years ago,” says the tradition, “here stood a convent, founded by a pious man in penance for his sins, and the inhabitants of the whole surrounding country journeyed to the chapel of the monastery to be edified by the sermons of the first monks. But the convent grew rich, and the monks departed from the strict rules of their order, and where humility, poverty, and chastity had once prevailed, there soon reigned pride, luxury, and licentiousness. The monks seduced the wives and daughters of the peasants of the environs; and, as they were rich, and had abundance of every thing, they found means to increase by bribery the influence and consequence which they derived from

their profession. The convent was transformed into a palace, and, instead of prayers, nothing was heard all night long but the noisiest revels ; and the songs and the cheers of tipsy priests and women usurped the place of matins.

“ At length Christmas came. Even at this solemn festival they pursued their former courses, and passed night after night in riot and debauchery. The clock proclaimed the midnight hour, and the bells, which had been accustomed at that time to call together the population of the vicinity to mass, began to ring of themselves, for the friar who officiated as bell-ringer was as drunk as the others, and had neglected his duty. But the assembled monks little dreamt that an angel was ringing the bell to call them for the last time to penance. But one of the most dissolute of the monks, when he heard the bell, clasping a half-naked woman with one hand, took up his glass with the other, and cried, ‘ Do ye hear the mass-bell, brethren and sisters ? Christ is born ; let us drink to his good health.’ The whole company heartily joined him ; they clashed their glasses, and repeated, ‘ Christ is born. To his good health.’

“ But none of them had time to drink, for that very moment a tremendous storm arose ; lightning struck the convent, which sunk to a great depth below the surface of the ground, and the peasants of the environs, collected by the sound of the bells for midnight mass, beheld in its place a bottomless



lake, from which issued the pealing of bells till the clock struck one."

Such is the story told by the aged inhabitants of the environs of Flers. "Year after year," added the narrator, from whose lips I have written down this account, "the bells are still heard ringing on the night of Christmas Eve; and it is only for this one hour, while the monks are ringing the bells, that they obtain any remission from the torments of hell to which they are doomed."

Aged people assert that they have heard the bells, or that they knew people who had heard them. The poetry of the people, the depravity of the monks in general, an earthquake, were no doubt the sources of this tradition, which once had a moral, and still possesses a poetic value.

The history of Evreux contains traits too instructive to be omitted. It was the birthplace of Witmond, who became a monk in the convent of St. Croix Leufroy—the same who was not afraid to tell home truths to William the Conqueror. William sent for him to England; but Witmond refused the mitre and the crozier, saying, "Thy conquest is a robbery, and I will have no hand in it. The blood which it hath cost lies heavy upon thee, like that of the innocent man upon his murderer; and I will keep my hands clean from it." How refreshing it is, in those barbarous times, when even churchmen buckled on the sword that they might share the spoil, to meet with a man who

durst call the conduct of the mightiest of the mighty by its right name ! It is very convenient to bark with the dogs when one is a dog, or has been properly trained.

William, more honest than those who bowed to his shadow, declared, "The friar is right !" and he was generous enough to forgive his severe language, and patiently suffer himself to be styled a robber. Had Witmond called him a bastard, he, like the garrison that once cried out to him "Pel ! Pel !" would have atoned for the dire insult with his blood ; but the term robber he deemed beneath his notice. He even purposed to appoint the bold monk archbishop of Rouen. But the country and the nobles set their faces against the execution of this design : they knew that a man who did not fear the Conqueror would not spare them, and so he was not elected.

When, at a later period, Normandy was reconquered by the English, the people of Evreux and its environs had frequent occasion to express their antipathy to their new masters. In 1441, in the reign of Charles VII., Evreux itself was taken by the aid of two fishermen, who conducted them in the night to the foot of the walls and provided them with the means of scaling them. A few years later, in 1447, Floques, bailly of Evreux, setting out from this place, took the town and castle of Pont de l'Arche. Here again it was a man of the lower class who opened the way into the place to the knights and soldiers. A higgler of the environs,

who, whenever he went with his cart to Rouen, stopped at Pont de l'Arche, concerted with Floques ; and, early one morning, when he solicited admittance of the gatekeeper, and was actually let in by the latter who knew him, he contrived to amuse the man till the French soldiers, who were near at hand, arrived. An English sentinel, on hearing the noise, attempted to close the gate, but fell by the axe of the higgler.

Verneuil, likewise, in the vicinity of Evreux, was recovered from the English by a miller. Having been affronted by an English soldier, he went to Floques and offered to put the town into his hands. He led Floques in the night to his mill on the town wall, and as, after the town was taken, the English still retained possession of the castle, it was this miller who, by diverting the course of the stream which supplied them, obliged them to surrender.

In all these cases is displayed the active and independent spirit of the people, which could no longer brook any foreign dominion, and stimulated the nobles to co-operate in the expulsion of the foreigners.

On another occasion, about the same period, the people manifested not less energy against its own rulers. Evreux was the see of a powerful bishop, and, as a spirit of reform gradually began to awaken, and no better means of quelling it had yet been devised than the faggot and the scaffold, the bishop of Evreux, following the example of his Spanish and



Italian brethren, introduced the Inquisition in 1450. But its authority was of very brief duration. The Norman was accustomed to have justice administered in broad daylight, and the judges of the Holy Office, sneaking about in the dark, were to him an abomination. An open and free expression of opinion concerning this new mode of legal proceeding was quite sufficient to overthrow it. No riot, no insurrection, was requisite for that purpose. Public opinion is a Medusa's head, which petrifies enemies without touching them. It is not necessary to resort continually to the sword, but only to make a frank declaration of sentiments. The Normans never were base enough, they had in their composition too little of the stuff of which slaves or serfs are made, not to make known their opinions without reserve. Hence it was that, without spilling a drop of blood, they contrived, even under the absolute sway of a Louis XIV., to cause their rights to be more or less respected.

Notwithstanding the demise of the Inquisition, nay, perhaps precisely because it was so short-lived here, the Reformation made but little progress in Evreux itself; and it was only once that the adherents of the new doctrine at Evreux assembled en masse in the churchyard of St. Leger, and broke in pieces, as was then the fashion with them, an image of the Virgin and a few others. Coligny, on the other hand, besieged Evreux in vain. On inquiring into the proximate causes of this exception—for the Protestants had the ascendancy for a time in all



Lower Normandy—we find that a bishop of Evreux, Claude de Sainte, had the policy to obviate the Reformation by reforms, and that Hahnemann's theory was applied three centuries ago to religion and politics. Though the prelate, like the doctor of the present day, administered his antidote in millionth parts, they sufficed to cure the disorder. He improved the breviary, the ritual, and the mass-book, reformed the clergy, forced them to lead a rather more Christian life, or at least to avoid scandal, and encouraged the sciences among them. As the inferior clergy almost every where blew the spar of the Reformation into a flame, because the higher had doomed them to inactivity and passive obedience, because there was a clerical aristocracy and a clerical democracy, and the latter was generally in rebellion against the former—he elevated it, as it were, into the sovereign people, re-constituted a sort of republic, such as existed in the first Christian congregations, abstained from issuing ordinances, and summoned a synod whenever he wished to carry any point. It is certain that, if the higher clergy had every where acted thus, Luther and Calvin would have been at this day two unknown persons, or at least known in a very different manner and degree. But this is the curse of stupidity that, having once advanced to a certain point, it cannot turn back, and must necessarily go forward till it runs its head against a rock. At any rate, the higher clergy of Evreux afforded proof of this in their treatment of Claude de Sainte; for

the homœopathic reformer of Evreux had to defend himself against the charge of being a professor of Calvinism.

The inhabitants of Evreux were such stanch Catholics, that they, with the peasants of the adjacent country, armed in behalf of the League, and obliged other towns of different sentiments to admit garrisons of its partisans, till at length Marshal Biron took Evreux itself after a short siege for Henry IV. The battle of Ivry, which decided the fate of France, and established the dynasty of Henry IV., was fought near Evreux, on the 14th of March, 1591.

Our homœopathic reformer adhered to the cause of the League, and fled when Henry's troops had taken possession of his see. He appears till his last breath to have been an implacable foe to this highly extolled sovereign, who first bartered a mass for a crown, and afterwards a crown for a mass; for we see him standing forward, in the warmth of his Christian indignation, as a defender of the king's murder. If the historian of Evreux, from whom I borrow this fact, was accurately informed, the bishop's vindication must exist in some library in London, and it must be interesting to read the arguments adduced by the pious prelate in defence of such an atrocity: but what is there that these holy personages could not prove and have not proved! And if a bishop could defend the deed, it is by no means improbable that a Jesuit could perpetrate it. Claude de Sainte was apprehended at

Caen, received sentence of death at Rouen, which was commuted at Paris to imprisonment for life, and suffered this mitigated punishment at Crève-Cœur, near Lisieux.

His successor was Jacques David de Perron, the same who converted Henry IV. Perron was the very man for this business; for he had himself been a Protestant and then turned Catholic. He must have been an adept both in converting and perverting. One day he proved to King Henry III., by the most striking evidences which can be adduced, that there is a God. All present were edified, and extolled the admirable discourse of the accomplished believer. "Sire," said the latter, "I have to day proved that there is a God: to-morrow, if your majesty will please to listen to me, I will prove by equally cogent reasons that there is no God." Against such a logician the scruples of the gallant and galant Henry IV. could not maintain their ground. Hence we are enabled to comprehend the meaning of the saying, "*Paris vaut bien une messe*," which the pious Perron probably took for the text of his catechisation. He was nominated Bishop of Evreux, after he had obtained absolution for Henry at Rome.

I could relate much more concerning Evreux—the burning of a heretic, and an astonishing history of the nuns in a convent near Evreux, who were possessed by the devil, and who, in their supernatural folly, wished to pursue a very different pastime with the priests of the surrounding country



than telling their beads, an affair which terminated in a sentence of death on one of the priests, the imprisonment of the prioress, and the burning of the proceedings on the trial, to avoid scandal—but I think what I have said is enough.

I shall add but a few words concerning the character of the people. A genuine Low-Norman anecdote, given in an ancient manuscript chronicle, shall suffice. One day, a sturdy peasant in the environs of Evreux was at work in the fields amidst storm and rain, and went home in the evening thoroughly tired and drenched to the skin. He was met at the house-door by his loving wife, who had been at home all day. "My dear," said she, "it has been raining so hard that I could not fetch water, and so I have not been able to make you any soup. As you are wet through, I shall be obliged to you to fetch me a couple of buckets of water; you will not get any wetter." The argument was striking; so the man took the buckets and fetched some water from the well, which was at a considerable distance. On reaching the house, he found his wife comfortably seated by the fire; there, lifting one bucket after the other, he poured both over his kind and considerate partner. "Now, wife," said he, "you are quite as wet as I am, so you may as well fetch water for yourself; you can't get any wetter." As the story has been deemed humorous enough to preserve, I have thought it remarkable enough to repeat. It moreover affords evidence of the custom prevailing in Lower Nor-



mandy, according to which the wives of husbandmen rarely go out to work in the fields, but stay at home while the men perform the out-door labour. Then again it contains an admirable lesson for both husbands and wives, and therefore deserves recording for their benefit.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Origin of the Seine by St. Pierre—Continuation of St. Pierre's idyl by Charles Nodier—Historical Recollections—Beauty of the River and its Banks—The Downward Passage from Rouen recommended—The Bar—Ascent of the Seine from Havre to Rouen—Abbey of St. Gartain—Castle of Tancarville—La Pierre d'Acquit—The Devil's Tower—The Giant's Stone—Quillebeuf—The Pilots—Manners of the People of Quillebeuf—Remains of Lillebonne—Ruins of the Castle; historical Events connected with it.

BERNARDIN DE ST. PIERRE was a genuine Norman. He could not behold the beauties of his native land, without conferring on them a new life. The hill, the river, the tree, were to him more than they appear to ordinary eyes. His heart felt what his eye saw. He understood the language of Nature, and she related to him what follows:—

“The daughter of Bacchus, Seine, a nymph of Ceres, accompanied the goddess of fruit to Gaul, when she went to all the countries in the world in quest of Proserpine. When Ceres had finished her search, her attendant begged that she would give her those meadows which you see before you, in reward for her service. The goddess granted her

request, and at the same time bestowed on the daughter of Bacchus the power to make fruit and corn grow wherever she trod. She therefore left Seine in this country, and gave her for playmates and attendants several nymphs, and among others Heve, whom, as Ceres was apprehensive lest the god of the sea might some time or other carry off Seine, as the god of the nether world had done her daughter Proserpine, she charged to watch and guard her.

“One day, when Seine was playing upon the beach, looking for shells, and in sportive glee running away from the waves, which now wetted her feet, now ascended to her knees, Heve, her companion, desried among the billows the white hair, the purple face, and the azure mantle of Neptune. The god of the seas came from the Orcades after an earthquake, and was traversing the ocean, to examine with his trident whether its foundations had sustained any injury. As soon as she saw him, Heve cried out to warn Seine of the danger that threatened, and the latter immediately fled to the meadows. But the god had perceived the nymph of Ceres, and urged his sea-horses in pursuit of her. He was already near enough to stretch out his arms to grasp her, when Seine implored the aid of her father Bacchus and Ceres her mistress. They heard her prayer. The moment Neptune laid hold of her, the body of the nymph dissolved to water. Her veil and her green garments, with which the wind wantoned, became emerald-tinted

waves. She was transformed into a river, which to this day takes delight in traversing those districts that the nymph loved to frequent. But the most surprising circumstance of all is that Neptune, in spite of this metamorphosis, has not ceased to be enamoured of her—just as the river Alpheus is still said to cherish a secret love for the fountain Arethusa. But, though the god of the sea is still in love with Seine, Seine is equally stedfast in her aversion to him. Twice a day he pursues her, snorting and roaring; and each time Seine seeks refuge in her meads, hastening back, contrary to the natural direction of rivers, towards her source. And she has ever kept her green waters separate from the azure waves of Neptune.

“Heve died of grief, and a monument of white and black stones was erected for her on the shore. This is the craggy rock which to this day bears the name of Heve, and which has an echo to warn the mariner against danger, as ages ago it apprized the nymph of Ceres of the peril that threatened her.

“The other companions of Seine were metamorphosed, like herself, on the several spots where they happened to be in their flight, and are now the Aube, the Yonne, the Marne, the Oise, the Andille, and all the other rivers, which respectfully pay their tribute to their old mistress Seine.

“Amphitrite, when she heard the unwelcome tidings, caused several gulfs to be formed, that they might serve for secure harbours against the fury of her faithless spouse: and these are now the ports



which afford an asylum to navigators from the sea to Rouen."

A mind awake to the beauties of Nature and a lively imagination are displayed in this idyl of Bernardin de St. Pierre's. Charles Nodier, a clever writer of Paris, has attempted to continue St. Pierre's fiction in his own style.

"Not long afterwards," he proceeds, "Friga, the beautiful Thetis of Gaul, was jealous when she saw that Liofne, the Celtic Venus, had obtained the apple, which was the prize of beauty, while she herself had not even been invited to be a candidate for it. She resolved to be revenged. One day, when Liofne had approached the Seine, and was visiting the meads traversed by the nymph, Friga carried off the apple, which Seine had laid upon a rock, and sowed the pips in the adjacent country, in order to perpetuate her victory. Hence originated the innumerable apple-trees which grow in this country, and perhaps also the spirit of litigation, which, it is said, perpetuates lawsuits among the inhabitants." The wit here is keen enough, but it is not in keeping with the simply beautiful idyl of Bernardin de St. Pierre, and I quote it merely to show the difference. I am surprised that M. Nodier has not taken advantage of this allegory to introduce some allusion to the predatory expeditions of the ancient Normans, who seem to have learned something of old Neptune, and might, at any rate, have served for counterparts to the Greeks before Troy. This would have been moreover a perfectly

natural transition to the modern history of the Seine.

The history of the Seine?—Why should not a river have its history, as well as the country through which it runs; as the remains of yon ruined convent, of that deserted castle, concerning whose stones thick tomes are written; as that paltry village, which has merely the reputation of having once been a town! There are streams whose history would be more instructive than that of the greatest capitals in the world. The nymphs of the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Nile, would relate the ancient history of the world, the nymph of the Tiber that of the middle ages, and those of the Rhine and Seine that of modern times.

On the Seine, the Romans, the Gauls, and the Saxons, next the Franks and the Normans, and lastly the English and the French, encountered one another; and its waves have for ages been crimsoned whenever the fate of nations was decided. It has witnessed the dominion of the sword; the faggots of the Inquisition threw their glare upon its waters; it has heard the groans of the people when oppressed by the clergy, when abused, despoiled, trampled upon, by the nobles; it can relate the history of the Huguenots, the League, and the Fronde; it beheld the vain glory of Louis XIV., the infamy of a Louis XV.; and the outburst of that tempest when a nation broke its chains, and shattered with them in its fury the sculls of its keepers.

But it is acquainted too with other histories. It

could speak, for example, of the rich fleets, which the enterprising merchant loads with the fruits of the country, and the products of the toil of its labourers, and sends forth to distant lands. It could tell too of the sports of the lads and lasses on its banks, of the lovers whom it has borne by night upon its bosom—stories which would make us forget for a moment the stern gravity of national events, and transport us from the theatre of war into the joys of Eden.

Whoever understands the language may overhear all this any serene night in the murmur of the waves. But even he to whom this language is a riddle without key, may guess, at least, in a beautiful country, beside a stream whose banks exhibit here a bare rock, there a hill-side covered with terrace-like gardens, yonder luxuriant meadows and fields of waving corn, that a God has there erected himself a temple, to furnish a striking evidence of his power in the beauty of Nature. If the imagination of the spectator is not warmed by this scene, it must at least awaken feelings of devotion.

The banks of the Seine, as far as Rouen, frequently present the most exquisite prospects. Whoever travels merely to gratify the eye may, even after contemplating with amazement the deeply impressive beauties of the Rhine, still enjoy a trip on the Seine. The Seine, it is true, in its finest and grandest spots, has nothing to compare with the view from the Niederwald, the Drachenfels, Nonnenwerth and Rolandseck, and lastly the Lurlei. All these are more grave, more awful, more



sublime, or, if you will, more German. It is only at particular points on the banks of the Seine that you might fancy yourself on the Rhine. The hills are in general lower, the river, at least above Quillebeuf, where it widens almost to a sea, narrower and less imposing. Still there is near Quillebeuf a spot, which is in its way as grand, perhaps grander, than the banks of the Rhine. The stream here expands into a small bay, and on the one hand you see Quillebeuf, rising apparently out of the water, while the gray ruins of Tancarville look down upon you from a densely wooded height. The river itself at this spot is full of sand-banks, which shift from time to time, and are therefore extremely dangerous. You can scarcely ever pass this place without seeing the masts of one or more foundered vessels, rising, like grave-stones in a churchyard, above the water, and serving for a memento mori. The grandeur of the whole scene, and these indications of death and destruction on the water, excite the same sort of awe which Nature produces in us when she allows us a glimpse of her sublime and beautiful mysteries.

Above Quillebeuf the river narrows, and the ascent to Rouen presents an ever-varying prospect, in which is to be seen at one time a hill of beautiful form, adorned by a church or a château; at another, a naked rock, against which, in a stone-quarry, reclines the hut of a labourer; now a pleasant village; now an active little town, and, beyond that, luxuriant meadows and corn-fields. A trip by steam-vessel from Havre to Rouen, or from Rouen to Havre, is



an enjoyment that varies with every bend of the river. It is worth while to make this little excursion, even though one had to pass days and even weeks in the diligence to get hither.

Whoever has the option of going down or up the Seine ought by all means to choose the former. The whole passage then acquires a sort of dramatic interest. Immediately below Rouen, the river winds among islands of the freshest verdure. The whole country looks like a beautiful garden, in which every thing, arranged with exquisite skill by the almighty gardener, is refreshing to heart and mind. Rouen itself, surrounded by hills, with its Gothic churches, its bridges, its port enlivened by hundreds of sea and river craft, give to the introduction to the drama which is awaiting us the necessary gravity and a beauty sufficiently grand to enable us to guess the denouement, and to put us in such a mood as to enable us to comprehend the last act in all its force. Presently, the scene changes, and we are in a narrow valley bordered by rocks and hills. A quarry, a few cottages, a chapel, which tell only of industry, poverty, and the consolation of the unhappy, are at times the only traces left by the people who for thousands of years have gone up and down the river. A new prospect then opens upon us — a valley, a lovely, extensive plain, bounded by gently rising hills, shows us the ruins of the once powerful abbey of Jumièges, till the view again contracts, and we are once more hastening on between lonely hills and rocks. Below Caudebec the river grows wider; we

perceive more and more that we are approaching the sea ; and the traveller here meets with a phenomenon, which in its way is equally grand and surprising. The people of the country call it *la barre*. St. Pierre has told us that the sea-god still pursues the nymph of whom he is enamoured twice a-day up the river. At every flood-tide, when this takes place, the sea rushes upon the Seine, at first stops its current, and finally drives it back towards its source.\* The sea-god is an old sinner : he knows that the fair will not surrender, but that they must be conquered ; and the meetings of the god and the nymph are therefore real battles, so awful and so dangerous as to draw into the abyss any bold inhabitant of earth who ventures to approach too near. A distant roaring, like that of thunder foretelling the storm, is the precursor of this terribly tender embrace ; and it seems as if the nymph, the moment she perceives the advance of the god, is seized with a shuddering, for she begins to be agitated, and trembles for fear of what is about to happen. The scrutinizing eye presently descries at a great distance the furious billows approaching to the assault ; roaring and foaming, they meet the current of the Seine, lift it into the air, and even leap up to it, grasp it, and drag it back in triumph.

\* It would seem that the ebb and flood tide affect only the surface of the river, and allow its waters, at the depth of a few feet, to proceed to the sea. Without this under-current, if the whole body of water in the river were stopped for six hours, it must overflow the country for many miles around.

At first nothing is to be seen but a white stripe of foam, which, as it advances, appears more and more distinct, and comes on with gradually increasing rapidity, till at last it rushes, flying, as it were, upon the vessel, lifts it up, hurls it down again, and hastens onward. This phenomenon urges the water of the river over its banks, so that where we one moment saw a luxuriant meadow we behold in the next a watery waste ; where a verdant island smiled amid the stream, the waves play with the topmost twigs of the willows, which look like floating sprays torn from the trees. Year after year this embrace, or this conflict between the river and the sea, demands a number of victims, for it envelops the bark of the too confident navigator, dashes it against the bank, or capsizes it.

Whoever has not beheld the sea in the omnipotence of its fury, may form some conception of it from this phenomenon ; for here it hurls back in play a stream — its surface at least, to the depth of six or eight feet — to repel which the united wealth and strength of all the inhabitants of France would prove inadequate.

Such is the prelude to the last act of the drama, the denouement of which we see beyond Quillebeuf. The banks separate here, and form a bed many miles across—the bridal bed of the nymph and the god, in which they daily celebrate their nuptials. We have seen the nymph, and now advance to meet the giant god. At every stroke of the steamer's paddles the prospect widens ; the eye cannot em-



brace the vast expanse of water, and with a feeling of awe we cry, "The sea ! the sea !"

It is not my forte to paint landscapes or other scenery in writing, and I consider this as upon the whole an ungrateful field for an author, and where his readers obtain but a vague, undefined, and colourless picture. It is bad that, since the time of Walter Scott, people formally set about painting in travels and novels ; but it is still worse when they lay on their tints not in bold, broad touches, after the manner of Rubens, but attempt to delineate every leaf upon the boughs, or cannot see the wood for the trees. The old adage, "Cobbler, stick to thy last," on which Aristotle of yore lectured, is still applicable at the present day.

If a country, a landscape, has only a mere interest of beauty, it belongs by right to the painter ; but if it has also a scientific, a philosophical, an historical, an artistical interest, in that case it is our property. I would give a great deal to be able at times to write in colours and contours, and to paint in words ; but as, unluckily, I never could acquire that talent, I think with the ancients, and in spite of Scott, Lamartine, and thousands of others, "Cobbler, stick to thy last."

My course led me to ascend the Seine from Havre to Rouen. Soon after you have started, and left Harfleur on the one hand and Honfleur on the other, you perceive on the right bank a small château, on the spot where once stood the Benedictine abbey of St. Gartain. The history of this abbey is



unimportant. In the church was the tomb of Harlotte, mother of William the Conqueror, who, after the decease of Robert the Magnificent, married Herluin, count of Conteville, the founder of the abbey.

Opposite to this spot, navigators pretend to have discovered in the Seine, when the water is clear, the remains of a village, about which they relate many wonderful stories; but as I was not in that part of the country, and have not been so fortunate as to meet with those stories, I cannot communicate them to the reader.

Tancarville soon appears more distinctly on the left, and Quillebeuf on the right.

Merely as a ruin the castle has an importance, and it is worth the traveller's while to pay it a visit, if he is tarrying in the vicinity. Its walls and towers are the representatives of ages. But as I am no more of an antiquary than a painter, I confine my attention to those stones that have a history to relate. In the northern corner of the harbour, before the new castle, there stood such a stone. It was called *la pierre d'acquit*. Till the year 1789 the fisherman was obliged to bring hither his prize, if it was *franc poisson*. On a plate of copper, attached to the stone, was engraved this inscription :—

“L'esturgeon pris aux eaux de céans appartient à la sieurie par en payant aux pêcheurs cinq sols.

“Le marsoin doit deux deniers d'argent. Le saumon et la lamproie semblablement doivent aussi

chacun deux deniers d'argent, toutes fois et quantes qu'il est pêché aux dites eaux.

"De tout poisson trouvé en varech (on the strand) la moitié en appartient à la dite sieurie, et l'autre moitié aux trouveurs qui l'apportent sur cette Pierre, et peut on prendre pour ladite sieurie les dits poissons chacun au taux des juréz à céordonnez.

"Et s'il advenait qu'aucuns trouveurs des dits poissons ne faisaient les dits acquits des poissons qu'ils pourraient avoir pechez ou trouvez, sont et doivent être pris en forfait et les delinquents taxéz en amende par les officiers des dites eaux."

The Norman fishermen frequently contrived to make a profit by these seignorial dues, and never failed to bring a sturgeon that was worth less than five sols, for which they almost always received that price ; for the fish was considered by the lord as a royal one, and too noble to be set upon the table of a serf. But whether they brought all the large sturgeons, on the other hand, is extremely doubtful. The *pierre d'acquit* was dashed in pieces by the iron foot of the Revolution.

The *tour de lion*, on the west side of the castle-wall, is called by the people *la tour du diable*. The devil had expelled the lion, or we should certainly have had a story about the latter instead of the former ; and it was a shepherd of the Christian flock who dislodged the satanic intruder in his turn. The tower had previously been a prison, and was therefore well known, and in bad repute, throughout the whole country. But, not content with

of the Seine, and had it fortified. His courtiers even proposed that it should be called Henriqueville, but in this case also history pronounced its veto. The works were soon demolished, for Quillebeuf had a different vocation; and the very first glance at the place, with its lighthouse throwing the whole town into the background, seems to indicate this vocation. The inhabitants of Quillebeuf were destined to be the pilots of the vessels passing up and down the Seine; they were destined, like their lighthouse, to shew them the way among the rocks and sand-banks which every where threaten danger; and they may be proud of their vocation, for year after year, they can produce an account containing this item: "So many vessels saved and so many men."

So far back as the history of Quillebeuf extends there were always in this little town ninety-nine pilots, and this mystic number is still kept up. When any of the pilots dies, the vacancy is filled by his son, if he has one, or some other aspirant.

The trade of the town is insignificant and limited to the wants of the immediate vicinity. The pilots only have any intercourse with the more polished company on board the vessels sailing past the town; while the rest of the inhabitants of Quillebeuf live aloof from the civilized world, and have therefore retained the manners and customs of their forefathers in greater purity than those of other parts of the country. All the Quillebeufers form, in a manner, but one family, and consider themselves



as members of it. The ancient hospitality has not yet lost its right. A practice that is universal here again reminds us of the northern settlers and of the Germans in general. Before a lad marries in Quillebeuf,—we have already observed nearly the same thing in Etretat,—he *studies* the damsel of his choice. These studies are of a truly patriarchal kind, like similar studies in Swabia, in Switzerland, on the Rhine, and in other parts of Germany. As soon as a young man has chosen himself a sweetheart, he obtains all those rights which marriage alone usually confers upon a husband. He visits his mistress as if she were his wife, and marries her as soon as his circumstances permit. Scarcely an instance is known of a lad forsaking his lass; and were any one to do so, all his townspeople would look upon him as infamous and treat him as an outcast.

Opposite to Quillebeuf, above Tancarville, the view opens into a valley in which you perceive the remains of the very ancient town of Lillebonne. Here are to be found ruins of almost all the epochs of European history. The Romans, the Normans, and the French, have contributed their share. Juliabona was the capital of the Caletes, who furnished 10,000 men for the insurrection of the Belgian Gauls against the Romans, in the year (of Rome) 679. Several Roman roads met at this point—a circumstance denoting the importance of the town at that period. The Roman historians of later times, however, are silent concerning it,



and we may thence infer that so early as the time of the Romans it had lost its former consequence, and that it was then, as it is now, a sort of ruin. Remains, two thousand years old, of a Roman theatre, and Roman baths, and the Roman utensils and coins which have been dug up, afford striking evidence of its early importance.

Near the remains of the Roman theatre lies another ruin, that of the castle of the counts of Harcourt, in which William the Conqueror once resided. Hither came Robert de Grandmenil, abbot of Auch, and previously master of the horse to William, who had been guilty of some offence—I forget what—against his sovereign, and had fled to Rome to avoid his resentment. The pope not only gave the abbot of Auch an apostolic letter, but sent with him two cardinals to effect a reconciliation. When William heard of his arrival, he said, “I will receive the legates of the pope, the general father of all the faithful, if they come to speak to me about the christian religion; but if a monk in my dominions dares utter an unseemly word, I will have him hanged ignominiously on the highest oak in yon forest.” Such was the declaration of the son of Harlotte to the envoys of the pope, at a time when a German emperor was doing penance barefoot at Canossa. William was a resolute prince: to such characters belongs the world, which is sure to obey when any one has the spirit to say, “I will it.”

Popular tradition relates that in this castle

William assembled his barons, when he first made them acquainted with his design of conquering England. The winds have since passed over the castle, and those walls, within which the fate of kingdoms was decided, are now the abode of the wise bird of Minerva, which muses and smiles on the vanity of petty mortals who boast of their achievements.

Around the ancient Roman theatre, around the castle of the mightiest of the mighty, now stand some hundreds of huts, ruins of to-day and yesterday, over which the tempest passes, and whose insignificance is their safeguard. That theatre tells of the popular festivals, of combats of wild beasts, of the blood of gladiators; yon castle speaks of the determined spirit and the pride of the Conqueror, and of the piles of dead upon which he erected his throne; and those huts of the hard, laborious life of the husbandman, born only to seem to exist, to aid the mighty to make history, and then to quit the stage.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Caudebec; beautiful View; the Church—Spring of St. Onuphre—Abbey of Fontenelle or St. Wandrille—La Maillerie—Ruins of the Abbey of Jumièges—Historical Events connected with the Abbey—The Enervés of Jumièges—William Longsword—Agnes Sorel—Superstition of the Inhabitants of the Environs—Digging for hidden Treasure—Legendary Tales—The Green Wolf—Duclair—Ambourville—Gargantua's Chair—Castle of Bardouville; tradition relative to one of its owners—Caumont—La Vacherie—Madame Dubocage and Voltaire—Heartlessness of the latter—Castle of Robert le Diable—Tradition respecting him—Wood of Roumare—Rouen.

THE ruins of Lillebonne had thrown me into a reverie, and in a few minutes, when I again looked around me, we had left them some leagues behind, and were already beyond Villequier—as high as which place old Ocean ascends in his amorous assault—and opposite to Caudebec. Vernet, the marine painter, declared that he considered the view of Caudebec as the finest in all France. It is indeed very beautiful, though there may be finer. The town is seated in a valley formed by the St. Gertrude, a small stream which here discharges itself into the Seine. On either side of this rivulet



rise hills of graceful form, clothed with wood. The Gothic church in the middle of the valley towers above the houses. The latter, at least those which face the Seine, are painted all sorts of colours, white, blue, green, red, and on the quays are alleys of tall trees and flower-gardens with verdant arbours. It would almost seem as if the town, having improved the charms which Nature bestowed upon her, now takes a pride in viewing herself in the mirror of the Seine.

The people of Caudebec, who had made a very gallant resistance against the English, were the chief instigators and actors in an insurrection of the peasants for the expulsion of those invaders after they had reconquered Normandy, and many of them paid with their lives for this temerity. The Reformation found active adherents at Caudebec, which was soon occupied by the Protestants. The revocation of the edict of Nantes destroyed the prosperity of the town, because the greater number and the wealthiest of its inhabitants emigrated to other countries, where they could worship God in their own way.

The church of Caudebec is accounted one of the finest specimens of Gothic-Norman architecture. On this point the partiality of the French for Henry IV. would be sufficient to drive all censorious critics out of the field; for that king is reported to have exclaimed, "*C'est ici la plus belle chapelle que j'ai encore vue !*" and I must confess that I dare not contradict the opinion. Let him,



therefore, who wishes to see what Vernet calls the finest view, and Henry IV. the finest chapel in France, put himself on board a steamer at Rouen or Havre.

Caudebec has now, thanks to the intolerance of the mistress of the great king, no more than two thousand eight hundred inhabitants. About half the number of its townsmen fell, during the insurrection of the peasants, at the battle of Tancarville, to which I shall hereafter advert.

In the vicinity of Caudebec there is a spring, called after St. Onuphre, the water of which formerly produced miraculous effects. On a certain day, young and old, male and female, bathed promiscuously in a muddy pool. Each of those who had any ailment brought a dry bough and threw it down near the spring, and thus a large pile was soon formed. In the evening the priest of a neighbouring church came to the spot, pronounced his blessing over the patients, set fire to the heap of boughs, and took care to manage matters so that, at the moment when the flames burst from the pile, a white dove was seen ascending close by. That this was the Holy Ghost not a creature doubted, excepting those who knew whence the dove came and whither it went. Provision was also made for miraculous cures, whenever they were needed for re-invigorating the belief in the healing virtues of the spring. Thus wherever superstition is to be fostered among the people, we meet with superstition at every step.

The monastery of Fontenelle, afterwards called St. Wandrille, was founded by St. Ouen in the 7th century. Wandrille was its first abbot. When we explore the ruins of Jumièges, we shall be reminded of Philibert, who, with St. Ouen and St. Wandrille, formed an intellectual triumvirate, which in the times of rude power, under the Merovingians, sought to diffuse the light of science and civilization. Thus, under its first abbot and for some time afterwards, this monastery was an asylum and school of those branches of knowledge which humanise the mind and manners; and here Wandrille himself soon collected a library that was considerable for the period in which he lived.

In the first years of its existence, this abbey gave to the episcopal see of Lyons two pastors, Genescon and Lambert, and to that of Rouen a successor to St. Ouen in the person of Bishop Ausbert. The conduct of this prelate, who, on the day of his installation, directed two tables to be laid, one for his rich guests, the other for the poor, who sat down with the latter and supplied them alone with refreshment, and who opened the treasures of his church to the needy, affords evidence of the spirit then prevailing in that monastery.

But this spirit of beneficence, of science, and of enlightenment, was not destined to be of long duration in this abbey. It was only as an oasis in the vast desert, from which stormy times soon swept all traces of cultivation.

Charlemagne strove to rekindle here the former

zeal for intellectual pursuits, for he had already comprehended that Science may become a handmaid to Power, and that her sword is often keener than even that of a Roland. For a time the schools flourished again at Fontenelle, and succeeding ages were indebted to the monks of this convent for the first collection of the Capitularies, which furnish a key to the plans of Charlemagne.

But under his successors the ancient ignorance, the rule of rude force, again predominated, and thenceforward the history of St. Wandrille is but an incessant series of priestly pretensions, hypocrisy, and depravity, opposed only now and then by well-meant endeavours to restore the original purity of the convent, but in general without success.

The last of the Merovingians, Theodoric, son of Childeric, died here. The curse incurred by his fathers discharged itself upon him. The justice of history often decrees that son and grandson shall make atonement for the sins of the father.

The Muse of history cannot pass even the inanimate stone without inscribing her lessons upon it. Thus those ruins of the church, which once resounded with the blasphemous prayers of an hypocritical piety, through which the winds now blow without resistance, and from which the passing tempest generally rends a few more stones, proclaim that there reigns a justice which is above the calculations of man. And within those monastic walls, where men formerly sported with vows which they called upon God to witness, and where now the



spinning-wheel and the steam-engine are at work, is written the sentence which condemns the idleness that deems itself called to direct the destinies of men here and even hereafter, and gives labour the right to turn it out of its possessions.

Before you reach Jumièges, the twin abbey of Fontenelle, you pass La Maillerie, a château in good preservation. The park and mansion are handsome. They were the property of Madame de Nogu, whom I have mentioned in treating of Orcher, and who was here, as well as there, the benefactress of all around her. She has raised herself a monument in the affections of the poor. Her name will live in the memory of the people, and her history will sooner or later be transformed into a Norman popular tradition.

Jumièges, whose ruins, still proud in their destruction, nod to us in the distance, is, as I have said, the twin brother of St. Wandrille. Its history, in regard to the pursuits and conduct of the clergy, is precisely the same: the names alone differ. St. Ouen, the confidant of Clovis II., was the founder, St. Philibert, the first abbot. The convent was much more resorted to than Fontenelle; for the number of the monks rose in ten years from seventy to not fewer than eight hundred.

At a later period, the same circumstances occurred here as at Fontenelle, and we find the same depravity among the monks, and the same occasional and transient attempts at reform; till at length, in 1330, pope Benedict VII. exhorted them at least not to



trample in public upon the monastic rules and upon the laws of morality and humanity.

Even in accidental events the history of Jumièges bore some resemblance to that of St. Wandrille. As the last scion of the Merovingian line expired here, so there another sovereign house became extinct by the death of its last princes. Charlemagne exiled Tassilo, duke of Bavaria, and his son Theodoric, to Jumièges, and both here expiated a sin committed a century too early to lead to an independent throne instead of a convent.

The monks seem not to have been satisfied with this honour ; for they afterwards invented another story, in which they attributed to themselves much the same part that they had played in regard to Tassilo and his son. According to this story, which became a popular tradition, Clovis II. had, besides the three sons known in history, two others, who rebelled against their father, by whose command they were *enervé*, and then sent for life to the abbey of Jumièges. This tale was recorded in the chronicles, and even perpetuated by a monument. The latter gave a great deal of trouble to antiquaries, till the simple remark that the two figures represented upon it are covered with mantles decorated with lilies, overthrew the untenable supposition that they were the sons of Clovis, because it was not till much later that the lily was adopted in France as the royal flower. The people, however, filling up the outline, relate that the two young men, after their nerves had been cut by command of their

father, were put into a boat without a rudder, with one attendant, a jug of water, and a loaf of bread, and turned adrift on the Seine. The current wafted them, in spite of the windings, islands, and bridges, from Paris to Jumièges, off which place the boat stopped of itself; whereupon the abbot received the princes and ordained them. They died at a very old age, after doing severe penance for their sin. The last circumstance, to be sure, was not in accordance with the tombstone, which represents two youths.

Besides Tassilo and his son, and these two imaginary *enervés*, the walls of Jumièges have lodged other princes and kings. The people and their traditions have preserved the remembrance of two of them.

The Normans had destroyed the abbey, and it lay in ruins when the second duke of Normandy ascended the throne. Rollo, on finding his authority established, restored tranquillity, and gave force to the laws. Two monks, who had fled from the swords of the Normans, and grown gray abroad, wished to die in the house where, half a century before, they had taken the vows. They found nothing but ruins and waste land where the abbey once stood, while all around the spot were luxuriant fields. They built an hermitage among the ruins, and became the pastors of the neighbouring country. One day, William Longsword was hunting in the peninsula of Jumièges, and found the two monks in their hermitage. Weary and thirsty, he asked them

for something to eat and drink, and the recluses set before him bread and water. William disdained this fare, and when the hermits told him that they had nothing else to offer, he retired angry and sneering at their poverty. No sooner was he gone than a huge wild boar rushed upon him and threw him down, but without hurting him. That this was a miracle is evident; and William regarded the accident as a punishment for his behaviour to the pious recluses. He went back, begged pardon, and promised them to rebuild the monastery, in memory of his wonderful deliverance from the boar; and he kept his word.

Another prince, whose memory meets the wanderer among the ruins of Jumièges, is Charles VII. of France; but the attention paid to him by the abbey and its historians is only as the satellite of a brighter planet. While the king was driving the English out of Normandy, Agnes Sorel had accompanied him hither, and resided in the neighbouring castle of Mesnil, where she died. Her heart was buried at Jumièges; her memory came to be attached to the walls within which dwelt her lover, who visited her daily; and it is rarely that a Frenchman passes the spot without paying her his tribute of gallantry.

It is well known how Agnes Sorel stimulated the imbecile prince to activity by her love, how she made victory the price of her favour. England was vanquished not by French men, but by French women, and the names of the two victorious heroines are



Agnes Sorel and Jeanne d' Arc. The former contrived to turn an enervated prince into a man, the latter to make an army out of a dispirited multitude; the one gave to the prince the will to fight, the other imparted to the people the power to conquer. The women of France have a right to be proud of both; and if there were but these two that became heroines in France, they would be sufficient to justify the gallantry of the men towards the sex. But the French women in general are more energetic, more independent, more self-sufficient, than those of any other nation, with the exception, perhaps, of Polish women. A German woman has a power of suffering, of endurance, such as the French woman does not possess: the latter is revolted as soon as she is no longer capable of enduring what surpasses her strength. Hence the new idea of the French women to claim the rights of men, since the men have begun to disregard the rights of the women, since they shift from their own shoulders, and impose upon them, burdens which they are themselves called to bear.

Agnes Sorel is as bright a phenomenon in her way as *la Pucelle* herself. She continued to be nothing but a woman, and conquered the English with those weapons which Nature had given her in order to conquer. Joan of Arc, on the contrary, borrowed of the man sword and helmet, became man herself, and put to shame all of that sex. Indeed, a woman must envy the former more than the latter; but men must blush when they think of the



Maid of Orleans. Joan received the crown of martyrdom, and Agnes saw the children whom she had suckled grow up; the one died on the scaffold, the other in giving life to an infant; the one is called "la belle des belles," the other, "la Pucelle."

The blunt, deeply moral peasants of Normandy, who could not peep behind the royal curtains; who knew not that every endearment gained by the king from Agnes Sorel was a fresh spur to exertion against the enemies of the country, recognised in her the mistress only, not the heroine, and pronounced their judgment upon her accordingly. Whenever they saw "la belle des belles" from the other bank, they hailed her in scurrilous epithets, after the fashion of the people of Caen, who shout to each other from one side of the river to the other. *S'engueuler* is the term applied to this custom at Caen; the peasants of Jumièges called it *folerie*, *heulerie*. They were rigid moralists, the old Normans, and so most of them are still at the present day.

All these different recollections give a peculiar charm to a pilgrimage to the ruins of Jumièges, when it is considered that as an architectural work they are grand, that they are situated in a beautiful luxuriant country, that thus Nature, Art, and History unite to elevate us, and to give a higher flight to our ideas.

But the environs of Jumièges present other matter for speculation to the observer. We have seen that the convent, on its first foundation, encouraged

flattering hopes, that it promised to become a seminary of learning and science, diffusing around it enlightenment and happiness. Whoever has any intercourse with the inhabitants of the vicinity must confess that these promises were not realised; for in all Normandy—and the clergy were active every where in the same spirit, and here found besides a people endowed with a lively imagination—there is scarcely a district where such gross ignorance and superstition prevail, and where the people are so stupid, as hereabouts. I am quoting the words of Dechamps, the historian of Jumièges, and at every step you meet with evidences of their truth.

Digging for hidden treasure is a common practice here; and I heard of a village—I forget its name—where not long ago all the inhabitants laboured every night for a whole year with this object before they discovered the futility of their efforts. Due incantations always accompany such undertakings, and the old folks are still thoroughly persuaded that the failure was owing solely to some blunder in the formula, and that the treasures most assuredly exist, for the late Gertrude, who was a very respectable witch, had seen them in spirit and in truth. While digging, they had always several old donkeys in readiness to be laden with the treasure; for it is an undoubted fact that whoever carries a prize of this kind from the spot where it is found will die within the year; and of course it is but reasonable to employ an old four-legged ass to perform that task rather than a two-legged one.

The land belonged to the convent, and consequently so did the treasures too by right, or at least half of them; the danger was, therefore, invented to force the finder to apply for help, and thus make him betray his own secret.

When cattle have the cholic, all that the owner has to do is to go before sunrise, on St. John's day, barefoot and without being seen, and pull up two handfuls of corn-halms in a neighbour's field, to twist these into a sort of rope, which he must wind round the body of the ailing cow or other animal, at the same time repeating the first verses of St. John's gospel:—"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God," &c. The cow cuts a caper, and is as hearty as a fish in water, that is to say, when it is not ill.

When a person is drowned, and his body is not found at once, you need only get a taper consecrated, set it up on a board, light it, and turn board and taper adrift on the water. You may be very sure that the light will float to the spot where the body lies, no matter whether it be up or down the river, and stand still over it.

The whole country abounds of course in tales and miracles. One of the most striking of these is said to have taken place on occasion of the decease of the second abbot, Alcadre. Feeling that his dissolution was at hand, he became uneasy, not about his own death, but on account of the nine hundred monks whom he should leave behind. He was afraid lest the great number of the monks would



exceedingly embarrass his successor, and therefore prayed to the Lord that he might live a little longer. But in the night he had a vision. The angel Gabriel, or Michael, came to him and said that he was right, and that the Lord would provide for the future tranquillity of the convent. And the angel went through the dormitory of the monks, and marked four hundred and sixty of the most pious of them with a palm-branch, and then went back to the abbot and said to him :—" Be easy ; all that I have marked the Lord hath found worthy to appear before him, and they shall stand in his presence in the third night from this." The abbot rose comforted in spirit, and informed them how short a time they had to live. All of them prepared themselves for death ; and in the third night, when they were saying Amen to the midnight prayer, the spirits of the happy band were summoned away.

That an angel, the destroying angel of the plague, was the agent in this affair, is pretty evident. Now the plague is a scourge of God ; the monks might not like the people to believe that the Lord at times scourged the shepherds as well as the flock, and hence the origin of this miracle.

Another of these wonders likewise points very plainly to its source. Not far from the convent of monks was a nunnery founded by St. Philibert. Whether the saint showed common prudence in placing the cells of the nuns so near to those of the monks is a question. At any rate, when the saint, after he had incurred the displeasure of his



holy friend St. Ouen, was thrown into prison and afterwards banished, St. Austreberthe, the holy abbess of Pouilly, was likewise exiled from her convent. Among other Christian duties, the abbess and her nuns had undertaken to wash the garments of the monks. A faithful donkey was accustomed to carry them from the convent to the nunnery. One day, a ravenous wolf fell upon the poor beast, and tore him in pieces without mercy. When the holy abbess heard this, she was very angry, and by her prayers she forced the wolf to perform the same office that his victim had done. She loaded him with the garments of the holy brotherhood, and, till he died of old age, the wolf was as steady and regular in his new duty as ever his modest predecessor had been.

In honour of this miracle a chapel was built. Time and circumstances pulled it down. A cross, "la croix à l'ane," was then erected on the spot, and I know not whether this has been spared by the hand of Time. But a popular custom, originating according to historians in this alleged miracle, and into which something of it at least has been transfused, still subsists, and would be worth notice even though it did not remind us of this story.

There are numerous fraternities within the jurisdiction of the abbey. One of these has chosen St. John Baptist for its patron and bears his name. The new president elected annually is called "le loup vert;" and it would appear that he derives this appellation from the above miracle. On the

23d of June, the eve of the feast of St. John, the new green wolf is installed in his office, and no emperor can boast that his coronation is performed with greater solemnity.

The whole brotherhood assembles for this purpose at the house of the old green wolf, and thence goes in procession to church, preceded by cross and flags, and each member wearing a cap in which is fastened an image of St. John. But the green wolf is covered with a green toga reaching to his heels, and has on his head a high green cap without brim and adorned with ribbons. At the head of the procession a boy in a cope carries two bells, which he rings without intermission, and the tinkling of which is only interrupted from time to time by the firing of the brethren. In this manner they direct their course to the church, singing the hymn of St. John. Near the ruins of the abbey the procession is met by the priest of the place in full paraphernalia, accompanied by his curates, the sexton, and the singing boys. A general salute is fired in honour of this meeting. The party enters the church, where the priest sings vespers. On leaving the church the whole procession repairs in solemn order to the house of the old green wolf, where a repast, which must not consist of any thing but fish and pastry, awaits the brethren. After supper, a large bonfire is lighted before the house of the old wolf; the lads and lasses, all in their best clothes, the latter decorated with ribbons, dance around it, till the brotherhood, drawn up as

before, and preceded by cross, flag, and bells, march in procession about the fire, singing an edifying hymn. When this is finished, all the brethren, with the old green wolf at their head, begin to dance round the fire.

The new green wolf, provided with a willow switch, lays it about the brethren, who, hand in hand, forming a long chain, again headed by the old wolf, run after the new one, whom they must surround and catch three times before he really becomes the green wolf. At the third time, they hoist him on their shoulders, run with him to the fire, and make believe to throw him into it by way of putting his courage to the last test. One of the persons present then strikes up the following song :—

Voici la St. Jean,  
L'heureuse journée  
Que nos amoureux  
Vont à l'assemblée.  
Marchons joli cœur,  
La lune est levée.

Que nos amoureux  
Vont à l'assemblée,  
Le mien y sera,  
J'en suis assurée,  
Marchons joli cœur,  
La lune est élevée.

Le mien y sera,  
J'en suis assurée.  
Il m'a apportée  
Ceinture dorée.  
Marchons joli cœur,  
La lune est levée.

Il m'a apportée  
Ceinture dorée;  
Je voudrais, ma foi,  
Qu'elle fut brulée.  
Marchons, joli cœur,  
La lune est levée.

Je voudrais, ma foi  
Qu'elle fut brulée,  
Et moi dans mon lit  
Avec lui couchée.  
Marchons joli cœur  
La lune est levée.

Et moi dans mon lit  
Avec lui couchée,  
De l'attendre ici  
J'en suis ennuyée.  
Marchons joli cœur  
La lune est levée.

I subjoin the tune of this song:—

*Gaiement,*



Voi-ci la St. Jean, L'heureux jour-née,  
Que nos amoureux, Vont à l'as-sem-blée.  
Marchons jo-li cœur, La lune est le-vée.

This song, which is sung to the accompaniment of a violin, is probably as ancient as the festival itself, and as there is not the remotest allusion in it



to St. John, it would almost appear that this saint is a later addition, and that the festival had formerly a different drift.

After all the ceremonies have been duly performed, the new wolf receives the insignia of his dignity, the two bells, and then marches at the head of the fraternity to his house, where another supper, likewise of *maigre* dishes only, is prepared and served up. Till midnight the strictest etiquette is observed at the supper-table, at which the brethren alone are allowed to sit, separate tables being laid for relatives and friends.

The green wolf is a severe censor of the brethren, and obliges every one who drops an indecent word, or omits to use the designations and expressions prescribed by their rules, to pay a penalty. The moment the clock strikes twelve, all of them take off their caps, and the festival concludes with the singing of *Ut queant*, &c. All restraint is thrown off, the utmost freedom of speech and song succeeds, and young and old dance all night long before the door of the green wolf to the tune of a fiddle.

Next day a new festival is held. A large loaf, in the shape of a pyramid, is carried by the brethren in procession to the church, and there consecrated. Dinner, supper, dancing, and singing, occupy the day, and the feasting lasts several days, according as the green wolf is richer or poorer.

In these ceremonies paganism and christianity are mixed up in nearly equal proportions, and this is no doubt one of those festivals which the first

priests of the latter re-baptized, and which, though they might deprive them of their old names, they could not divest of their ancient usages and peculiarities.

But enough concerning the convent ! The vessel speeds onward. No sooner have we lost sight of the abbey than we pass Mesnil, where "the fairest of the fair" once resided. Before us, on the right bank, is seated Duclair. White chalk rocks, covering the rear of the village, give a peculiar effect to the scene. It is asserted that one of the vertebrae of a giant was formerly found in the environs of Duclair ; what truth there is in this statement let anatomists decide. But that giants dwelt of old in these parts cannot be doubted by him who regards popular tradition as indisputable authority. At any rate, the imagination of the people has given birth to such monsters ; and if faith can remove mountains, how much easier must it be for it to create giants ! Opposite to Duclair, near Ambourville, is a hill, which goes in the surrounding country by no other name than Gargantua's Chair. The name is all that I have had the good fortune to meet with, but I am certain that, if any one born under a somewhat luckier star than myself would take the trouble, he might trace out the tradition concerning this giant's seat.

We soon pass Bardouville, situated at the foot of a hill whose summit is crowned by an ancient castle. Many years ago, so says popular tradition, there dwelt in this castle a knight, whose lady was forced

by her family to give him her hand, though she had bestowed her heart upon another. The latter, resolving to bury his sorrows within the walls of a convent, assumed the cowl in the abbey of St. George, on the other side of the Seine, of which he soon became abbot. He had chosen this house that he might at least be near the object of his passion and breathe the same air with her. Here a German sentimentalist would have sighed away the rest of his life, but that air and that proximity soon set the combustible Frenchman on fire. An accidental interview with the lady served to increase the flame. Thenceforward he swam across the Seine every night, and forgot in the arms of his mistress that he was a monk, and that she was the wife of another; till at length the knight surprised them, slew the abbot, and shut up his wife in the dungeon of his castle. Down to the Revolution, the monks of St. George prayed for the soul of this abbot, who had died without absolution.

Near Caumont, on the left bank of the river, are a number of stone-quarries, a visit to which might be interesting to the geologist. At the foot of the hill is a little villa, called La Vacherie, occupied in Voltaire's time by Madame Dubocage, the singer, whom the poet called the tenth muse. Grimm, however, relates an anecdote which is highly characteristic both of himself, of Voltaire, and of the lady. "I was present at that entertainment," says Grimm, "and I can relate particulars concerning it which the heroine herself was never acquainted



with. Voltaire was cudgelling his brains all day to compose a *quatrain* for her, but to no purpose. The god of verse, foreseeing the use which he intended to make of it, kept aloof from him. Supper-time arrived, but no verses. The bard of Henry IV., in his despair, called for a laurel bough, of which he formed a wreath, and put it on the head of la pauvre colombine, en lui faisant des cornes de l'autre main et tirant sa langue d'une aune, in sight of twenty persons who were at table; while I, who believe religiously in hospitality, and who maintain it to be of divine institution, was sorely grieved to see it violated by the first poet of France towards a good woman, qui prenait toutes ces pantalonades au pied de la lettre."

Had Grimm left posterity nothing but this anecdote, he would have done enough to characterise Voltaire to all eternity. Frivolity could not be carried to a greater length than in this instance.

Voltaire was one of the greatest, one of the mightiest, geniuses that ever existed. He was more than a genius, he was a character. His blows were those of a club, which crushed what it fell upon; his thrusts those of a dagger, which pierced the heart. But Voltaire was heartless to a degree that even a Frenchman rarely is, and the circumstance related by Grimm is well worthy of the singer of La Pucelle. He aimed at destroying christianity, or rather the religion that has sprung up out of the doctrine of Christ, and he did destroy it in France; but he, like so many others, was the bear in the



fable to which I have already adverted. He destroyed in France not only the Christian religion, but all faith and every thing great that is connected with faith. He conquered mind ; and interest, the grossest selfishness, have since been the ruling principle of the mass of his countrymen. The heartlessness with which he attacked what was most sacred, and made a strumpet of the Pucelle, and a candidism of feeling, have been transfused into the blood of the higher society in France ; and, whenever that which is lofty, and noble, and sublime is spoken of in such society, it is, with very rare exceptions, with a lying pretension to feeling, which pains are scarcely taken to cloak. It is only from that portion of society to which these doctrines have not penetrated that any hope of a better futurity can be entertained.

Behind La Bouille is the castle of Robert le Diable. Few popular stories have made the tour of the world like his, and of late years Mayerbeer has thought it worth while to rake it up again out of the dust of ancient romances, dramas, and chronicles, and to send it forth afresh upon its travels.

The story is remarkable in a literary point of view, for it furnished occasion for the poets of various epochs, and of almost all civilized countries, to exercise their skill upon it. France, England, Italy, and Spain have their romances on the adventures of a knight whom history has overlooked.

In a manuscript of the middle of the 14th century, entitled " *Miracles de la Notre Dame*," be-

longing to the Bibliothèque du Roi at Paris, there is among other things a drama on the miracle of the Virgin Mary by which Robert le Diable was converted. This drama, which was published by Frère of Rouen in 1836, shows in its plan and conduct that considerable progress had been made in the 14th century towards the restoration of poetry, that poets had acquired a certain boldness in handling their materials, and that they had already begun to discriminate characters more distinctly. If there was subsequently an epoch in which, though the language was more polished, nothing was produced at all equal to the Miracles and the like, the cause will be found in the arrogance of an unbridled aristocracy, in the depravity and pretensions of the clergy, and in the struggles to which these gave rise—in short, in the calamities of a period of transition, which is always poor in the creations of poetry and art. It was not till both these bodies were confined within their limits, not till a new era began to form itself, that people could think again of those pursuits.

Besides this dramatised story, there is another romance concerning Robert le Diable, likewise of the 14th century, and in verse, with the title of “*Le Dit de Robert le Diable*.” There is a third document on the same subject in the “*Histoire de Normandie, contenant les faits et gestes des Ducs et princes du dit pays, depuis Aubert premier duc et gouverneur d’celuy*.” Rouen, 1558.

The stories of Robert le Diable have obtained currency among the people of Normandy, or rather

originated in their traditions. The people had been obliged to endure the cruelties and caprices of a Robert, they had felt the keenness of his sword, and they called him the Devil. These traditions still live among the people of Normandy; but the people is a more severe, a more just judge than all the poets by whom they have been sung. It knew only his misdeeds, and pronounces sentence upon him, and says: Let him be damned, damned to all eternity! And who can doubt that he is, when the aged people in the environs of the castle tell of a gray wolf that no marksman can hit, that neither snare nor pitfall can catch, and that appears at times among the ruins, with the howling voice of a wolf, but in human language, bemoaning his sins, while indescribable horror seizes all who are near enough to hear the appalling tones. Others relate that Robert sometimes visits his castle in a shroud, and that he is greeted in the vaults with the lamentations and complaints of his victims, that the graves of his mistresses open, and their dead bodies show their bleeding wounds to the murderer. Individual herdsmen insist that they have seen him in the valley at the churchyard, imploring mercy of the corpses of his victims, who always drive him away with fresh maledictions.

So far tradition—now for history. Historians have seriously disputed to which of the different Roberts of Normandy the surname of the Devil belongs. The appellation is generally attributed to the father of the Conqueror, though he is most com-



monly called *le magnifique*, and was, we are told, *benin et doux* towards his friends.\* Others, and in particular the editor of the above mentioned miracle-play, claim the title of the *Devil* for the son of the Conqueror. No doubt that among the dukes there were more than one who deserved the title; but the Robert of the popular tradition was in all probability a knight, whose name History has erased from her book as a punishment for his misdeeds, and who continues to live in poetry alone, in order to serve for ages as a lesson and a warning.

On the right bank of the river is situated the wood of Roumare, the scene of the popular story of the bracelet, which was left hanging upon a tree untouched for several years, because the prince to whom it belonged had taught his subjects to respect the right of property. Whether this anecdote is true or not is of no consequence; for the people by whom such stories are invented make them merely to characterise their heroes. This story of the bracelet furnishes undeniable evidence that the people had, at one time, convinced themselves by facts that the Normans punished the simplest theft, and that they knew how to enforce right and justice; and as such it proves more than all the declamations concerning the barbarity of the northern invaders.

The view of Rouen gradually opens upon us; it is beautiful enough to exercise the skill of the painter, too beautiful for me to attempt to describe

\* "Hist. generale de Norm. Rouen," 1631.



it. Every moment brings us nearer to the venerable temples of the city, and such is the force of their attractions that the speed of the steamer cannot keep pace with our impatience. At length she reaches the quay, and a host of importunate *garçons* belonging to the hotels rouse us from our reveries, and we find ourselves surrounded by the prosaic bustle of a French provincial town.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Resemblance of Rouen and its Environs to German Scenery — General Aspect of the City — Architectural Decorations — Character of the Houses of the Middle Ages — The Cathedral — The Church of St. Ouen — Women of Rouen — Place de la Pucelle — Monument for Joan of Arc — Reflections on her Character and Fate — Trade of Rouen — Commercial Rivalry between that City and Havre — Society for the Towage of Sailing Vessels — Projected Railroad from Paris to Rouen and Havre.

A SINGULAR impression was produced by my first ramble in the streets of Rouen. When the valley of the Seine, illumined by the most brilliant morning sun, opened upon us, after passing a wakeful night in the diligence, at the distance of a league from the city, a voice within me whispered, "The Rhine! the Rhine!" Not that the Seine comes up by any means to the Rhine, but individual parts of the former involuntarily remind the traveller of the German river; and, a league or two above Rouen, where the road from Paris descends from the elevated plains into the valley of the Seine, there is such a spot. The rocks on one side lift their heads aloft into the clouds, while a rich

vale, covered with luxuriant crops and studded with timber, appears on the other. The nearer you approach the city, the stronger the impression of the resemblance to Germany becomes; and when you have entered it, when the diligence is threading its way through the narrow streets, the numerous churches, with their Gothic towers, and the old Frankish houses, would almost persuade you that you are still on the other side of the Rhine.

After I had seen my luggage carried to my hotel and got the dust brushed off my coat, I sallied forth, without rudder or compass, to stroll at random through the streets. In Rouen, such a walk is most interesting. I need not repeat how strongly these streets, these churches, these houses, remind one of Germany. In regard to architecture and to the manners of the people, which are mirrored more or less clearly in these houses, those of Rouen are a real school, a collection of all the styles of the last four centuries, a sort of history of the art, the more interesting because other much more living and more instructive histories are connected with it.

Not being myself an architect, I shall leave to others the task of classifying these houses by centuries, and of pointing out in them the progress or retrocession of the art. Particular houses, to say nothing of the churches, are real chefs d'œuvre, specimens of as high excellence as their age was capable of producing. To these belongs especially the Hôtel de Bourg-Meroude, in the Place de la Pucelle. This edifice is of the sixteenth century,

and is embellished by a great number of basso-relievos, which, though much damaged, still excite the admiration of artists. A portion of them, in five compartments, represents the interview between Francis I. and Henry VIII., and, being nearly contemporaneous with the event, is important not only for the art in general, but also for the history, and in particular for the costume, of the time. It is to be regretted that the artist did not work in colours; as he would then have shown the splendour of the courtiers and attendants of the two kings, concerning whom a contemporary writer says: "Plusieurs y portaient sur leurs epaules leurs bois, leurs moulins, et leurs prés." Another series of these basso-relievos, in the compartments of an hexagonal tower, exhibits scenes of pastoral life, in which the bold gallantry of those times is perpetuated; for some of the swains are making extremely free with the lady shepherdesses. In one of these compartments the shepherds are seen bathing, in another they are toying with the shepherdesses, in the third mowers are cutting grass, the fourth represents sheep-shearing, and in the fifth and last, the pastoral gentry are resting themselves and playing *à la main chaude*, the game called in England hot-cockles; one of the fair ones clapping her hands over the eyes of a swain, who holds behind him his open hand, which the others slap, and he has to guess who struck him.

On another house, No. 8 in the Rue St. Romain, at the corner of the Rue de la Croix, are to be seen



a series of basso-relievos, which are likewise of importance for art. They bear the date 1576, and exhibit in seven divisions in the first compartment a school, and in those that follow Eloquence, Logic, Mathematics, Music, Geography, Astronomy. All these basso-relievos are cleverly cut, and each is perfectly characteristic of its subject. Nor are they uninteresting in regard to science, for they are probably the decorations of the house of some dignitary of the ancient high school of Rouen, and thus indicate the branches of learning to which the instructions and studies of the time were confined.

The great number of houses which are adorned with basso-relievos, arabesques, pillars, or other architectural decorations, and which, to judge from their appearance, must have belonged mostly to plain citizens, attest that the people had a taste for art, and thus form a strong contrast with the flat uniformity of the buildings of modern times. It produces a singular impression when one sees beside a house of this kind, gray with age and storms, the spruce finery of a shop of the 19th century. In those ancient houses are reflected the tranquillity and the gravity of the time. If great attention was paid to the exterior, this was not done at the expense of the interior. The windows were small, because when people were at home they wished to be at home. Within prevailed a *chiaro-scuro*, tending to produce a feeling of awe, because it served to ennoble the mysteries of family life, and left scope for the imagination. If the philosopher

who once said that people ought to build glass houses were to rise from the grave, he would no doubt suppose at first sight that his notions had made considerable progress in the last two thousand years. The fact is simply this, that people have become more shameless. For my own part, I never was a friend to glass houses, and I consider it as much more prudent to cover the vices and foibles of men with the mantle of Socrates.

The houses of the middle ages were small churches; the churches of the present day are large shops: that is the difference. Whoever doubts this, let him come to Rouen, examine the small houses of the 15th and 16th century, within and without, seek to apprehend the solemn tranquillity of the *chiaro-scuro* in the rooms, the gravity of the fireside, that high altar upon which stood the household gods of our ancestors; then let him at night travel by post to Paris, that next morning he may attend matins at Notre Dame de Lorette, Rue Lafitte. The thing will then be much clearer to him. The times, their ideas, their notions, their wants, are reflected in all that men do; and therefore every stone that bears any trace of its age attests the character and the pursuits of the men of that age. The temples, and the triumphal arches of the ancients, which oblige the poverty of our genius to imitate ourselves, bear witness to the innate greatness of the Greeks and Romans; and the gothic dome, to the mighty power of faith in our ancestors. And the present time! where is its faith?—where

its works? In July, Humanity roused herself, stretched her stiffened limbs, and the world creaked, as a proof that our time might have its works if it pleased. But next day the puny men shrank in fear from their own doings, and sneaked back into their shops and behind their counters, when a few stragglers of the great days stalked through the streets. We have become weak-nerved, and though we may perhaps be susceptible for a moment of a higher excitement than the hale race of the olden time, yet next day the overstrained nerves give way, and the whole frame becomes doubly relaxed.

Our time knows but one interest—the material—that which may be calculated in pounds, shillings, and pence, that of the shop, and therefore it is obliged to borrow from the Romans their triumphal arches and their columns to do honour to a so-called hero, and to copy their temples, if it will not worship, or rather annoy, the Almighty in a shop, like that chapel in the Rue Lafitte.

That must have been a great time in which the gothic cathedrals were constructed. And yet I have often doubted whether they were the triumphal or the sepulchral monuments of Catholicism, or, like most triumphal arches, both in one : at any rate, when they were built, the palmy epoch of Romish authority was near its end. The whole thinking world already questioned the omnipotence of the successor of St. Peter ; and, though it upheld itself for another century, it was only in consequence of the law of gravity, which keeps a crazy building



together, till a single stone falls and the temple becomes a ruin.

The two principal works of Gothic architecture in Rouen, the cathedral and the church of St. Ouen, belong to the most remarkable specimens of that style which exist. The cathedral is in many places overlaid with embellishments, and individual parts occasionally detract from the total impression, and chain the mind down to the form when it would soar to God. The impression produced by the façade is quite magical. I often fancied, when I saw the uncertain light of the moon shining through it, that a marvellous conception of the imagination of the boldest bard stood petrified before me; and those rose windows often appeared to me like gigantic cobwebs, in which the storms of time had here and there broken a thread. I knew not sometimes whether all this—at least where the overcharging destroys the total effect, as in the façade of the cathedral of Rouen—ought to be called beautiful; but never did people express the idea, God, more powerfully, more awfully, more sublimely, either in figures or in buildings, than it presents itself to us in the Gothic cathedrals.

The church of St. Ouen is in a purer and simpler style, smaller and yet grander than the cathedral. It would, even at this day, extort an involuntary shudder from any *esprit fort*. One ought to pray either beneath the canopy of heaven, or in a Gothic cathedral, an image of the universe. But in the churches of these our times it is difficult to think of



any thing but the business of the day, the Exchange, and the shop.

The Exchange—yes, such are the temples of our age; and a temple of this kind has very recently been erected in Rouen. The architecture is tame and unmeaning as the idea from which it sprang; and I should not notice it, if one of the few artists who strive in our days to gain a higher vocation from art had not chiselled for it a few new conceptions in stone. David, the sculptor, has adorned the façade of the Exchange with two groupes, which give a value to the edifice itself. Every body knows that David understands the art of imparting life to stone, and converting it into flesh and bone; but it is not merely with his chisel that he works; his mind takes an active part in his labours. It is precisely in this point that David distinguishes himself from the herd of artists of the present day. The two statues, or rather groupes, represent commerce and navigation. I need scarcely observe that the figures are noble, the grouping ingenious—for they are by David: I shall, therefore, advert only to the ideas which he has expressed in them. Mercury, the god of trade, was till now the god of rogues also. But David said, “He shall be just;” and accordingly he put into his hand the emblem of the goddess of justice—the scales. This is sufficient to characterise the whole work.

There is a particular pleasure in strolling through a strange town, where one knows not a creature. The fancy then has full scope; it can create histories

without fearing that one better informed may break the spell of poetry by the truth of prose. I have often kept my letters of recommendation in my pocket for two or three days, in order to indulge in this gratification ; and I am the more delighted that I followed this propensity to reverie in Rouen ; for I could lounge in the churches, in the streets, in the promenades, without being reminded of everyday life by a single *bon jour* or *bon soir*. On the quays, indeed, my imagination was more circumscribed, for there I saw the beasts of burden doing their duty, and that is extremely prosaic. There reigns during the day the life of labour ; and it is only in the evening that the scene changes. The labourers gradually disappear, and where that class of people upon whom the curse of Adam seems to have pre-eminently fallen was just now most busily employed, issues forth, when the sun has set, and is tinging the whole country with his departing glory, another race, if you please, which, chatting, laughing, joking, takes exercise for an hour to make its rest the sweeter. The quays, the bridges, were covered with the whole of the beau monde of Rouen, and I enjoyed the sight, for many of its members were truly beautiful. I have scarcely ever seen in any French town in the high, the middling, and even the lower class, so many handsome women as in Rouen. I could not help noticing that they have in general light or brown hair, and very few black ; that they have blue eyes, and that even the cut of the face was rather German than Gallic.

The women of Rouen cannot be sufficiently thankful to the barbarians for having made the ancient Gallo-Roman Rothomagus their capital.

I am a real friend to barbarians, and know not that I should make any violent opposition, if an unsophisticated race of them were again to come and attempt to sweep away the civilisation of our time, which gropes about in the dark. In the countries which the Germans overran they imparted new energies to the people, brought them nearer to Nature, and improved and ennobled the race of men; so that, on examining these, one may mark the places through which they pass, or rather where they stayed long enough to leave behind them evidences of their presence. The idea that the barbarians in the end rather promoted than obstructed civilisation must, to be sure, be a little puzzling to the philosophic historians of the progress. But this is the case only because those gentry believe, in their progression, that it is sufficient to follow their noses in order to reach the goal, or I ought to say perhaps, because they do not see the end of the progress, and therefore care nothing about it.

In the first days after my arrival at Rouen, I made inquiry for the Place where Joan of Arc was executed. I wished to see the spot where the heroine suffered martyrdom, and where, surrounded by the flames, she looked death in the face with the same courage as she had confronted the enemies of her country. The direction given me at my hotel



led me to several Places, through a market, and again into narrow streets thronged with passengers. I must have mistaken the way, and therefore requested an idler standing at the corner of a street to lead me to the Place de la Pucelle. He complied, and I soon reached a small Place, through which I had already passed several times, without knowing that this was the spot where the sacrifice was consummated. A fountain, with the unmeaning figure of a woman, is all that patriotism and art have devised to perpetuate the memory of one of the most glorious characters that grace the history of France. This monument produced, in the first moment, an impression the more disagreeable, because I had expected something better from French gallantry. Besides, I was disturbed by the incessant clack of the market-people and their customers, and so I went home with a heavy heart.

By the way, I was filled with indignation at the manner in which both French and English have treated the Maid of Orleans, and even her memory. It seems as though they felt that this woman had shamed them both, these by conquering them, those by teaching them to conquer, and as though their wounded self-love urged them to revenge themselves on her and her memory. A Frenchman, when he had taken her prisoner, sold her to the English; French and English priests pronounced sentence of death upon her, and declared her a witch because an English commander would have it so; and the knights and warriors of England



kindled the pile, and undertook the office of executioners. But the vanity of the men seemed to be not yet propitiated : and so one, who is now rated high by all, statues and busts of whom are to be found in every cabinet, in every shop, arose and polluted her memory. The house in which she was born has been turned into a cow-house ; the tower where she was confined has been pulled down ; and it has been deemed superfluous to erect a worthy monument for her, either where she lived or where she died. On the bridge leading to the Chamber of the Deputies in Paris formerly stood the heroes of France, who are now in the museum at Versailles. The heroine who surpassed them all was not among them ; indeed, she would have put them all to the blush, not excepting those valets of the great emperor whom he called marshals, and whom we meet with at every step. How would these good people have looked beside this woman, who was of herself a host, who alone proved herself a man while all the men in France ought to have been put into petticoats ! What need we more to account for the neglect of *la Pucelle* !

If I were an Englishman, I would, if possible, erase her name from my remembrance. Or, I would do penance, and, strewing my head with ashes, perform a pilgrimage to Rouen, and preach up the like pilgrimage in my own country, that the blood which drenched the *Place de la Pucelle* might be washed out by the tears of my people. For this blood is a stain in the history of England, scarcely to

be paralleled in that of any other nation, and the history of them all is more or less rich in such events. The barbarity of savages, the murders of the Asiatic association of assassins, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the Sicilian vespers, the war of the peasants, and lastly the reign of terror, may be more or less accounted for; but this cowardly judicial murder of an heroic female is wholly unaccountable, inexcusable, a deed the like to which is never met with in the incessantly recurring atrocities of egotism and revenge, of distress and self-sufficiency.

There is but one more dire disgrace, namely, that of a Voltaire. It was not enough for him, in his hatred against priests, that the enemies of France had burned his heroine; he resolved to stain her memory. And so he produced a piece that is not to be equalled for filthy indecency, that attests an imagination filled with all that is vicious and base. The English and the priests had made a witch of the Maid of Orleans; it was reserved for Voltaire to make her a strumpet.

It seems as if that king, on whose head she placed the crown, conscious of his unmanliness, had blushed before her. For while she was tried and executed in Rouen, he remained quiet among his courtiers, and had neither sword nor energetic word to throw into the scale for her. Had the mistress of a courtier, a favourite of the king's, been in danger, they would assuredly have been saved by the threat of reprisals upon the captive English. For the Maid, the daughter of the people, not a hand was raised at

court, and only the populace of Rouen threatened to rise in her behalf, and had to be overawed by a superior force when the sentence was executed.

But the poetry of history required that the heroic career of the Maid should close in this and in no other manner. Her work was finished, her vocation fulfilled. France was saved, and it was necessary that her deliverer should die, that she might appear to posterity pure and unspotted, that she might deserve the goodly appellation of the Maid. It would have been a blunder in the plan of the pure epic if the heroine herself, the daughter of the people, had become at court among courtiers a wife, a countess, a princess, a mother. It behoved her to die, that she might be to all eternity a landmark between an age when the people were nothing and an age when they should become conscious of their strength. For thus it was that, when the chivalry of France was scattered like chaff before the wind which wafted the English across the Channel, a poor shepherdess, a nameless female, appeared and inspired the people with enthusiasm, self-confidence, and love of country, in order to be a sign of the times, a hope for futurity. She was the first heroine of the people in France.

And this the people have not forgotten for a moment. How it was necessary to keep them down by force while she was executed we shall see by and by. After her death the people celebrated her in their traditions. The shepherds, with whom she had formerly tended sheep, related that her coming,



like that of the Messiah, had been foretold by prophets; that for ages a notion had been current that a young maiden from the neighbourhood of Bois Chenu should save France when on the brink of ruin. They related to their children and grandchildren that, when this maiden was tending her sheep, the birds would come to her, pay her homage, and eat out of her hands. They then spoke of her divine vocation, and told how an angel had brought her sword and helmet, and devoted her to the battlefield and to martyrdom. But in Rouen the people asserted that, during her execution, a dove hovered over her, and ascended with her spirit to heaven. The people pronounced her a saint, and called her *la Pucelle*; and this name is her fairest monument—perhaps the only one that is worthy of her. For a Gustavus Adolphus, a stone with his name engraved upon it was thought necessary, for Napoleon a slab of rock with an N.\*; but the heroine could dispense even with the stone; the mere name of “the Maid” is sufficient for her, and is the fairest monument that ever was devised. This idea consoled me, though it does not justify those who deem a stone, a monument, necessary to commemorate their idols.

A few days afterwards, accident led me one night to the Place de la Pucelle. I had been strolling at random through the streets, till, on turning a corner, I found myself before the fountain and the statue of Joan. Solemn stillness reigned around;

\* This was, of course, written before the removal of his remains to Paris.—EDITOR.



the bright stars glistened in the firmament; and the moon threw her pale spectral rays upon the fountain. Deep awe pervaded my soul, and long did I stand absorbed in thought before the image of the Maid. A celestial smile played upon the inanimate features—such a smile as may have lighted up her face after the bloody day's work that ended in her first victory. Her eye flashed with the fire of heaven, which blasted her enemies, shattered helmets, and overthrew walls. And beside her stood a lofty shade. It was an heroic poet, it was Schiller. Bowing before the Maid, his bosom glowing with affection and enthusiastic devotion, he presented to her a wreath of white roses. And beneath her feet lay crushed the serpents which had hissed at her; and here I beheld the pursy faces of the priests who condemned her, and between them the sardonic visage of Voltaire.

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While Rouen was the capital of an independent state, it was at the same time the first commercial city of the country. After the conquest of Normandy by the French, the privileges of the city were confirmed: it retained the right of staple for all vessels passing up and down the Seine, and a great number of commercial privileges. The ships of various nations were compelled to land their cargoes at Rouen, and thus it continued to be the most important place of trade in Normandy. The revolution abolished these privileges. The wars

with England, which put an end to all foreign commerce in France, but encouraged home manufactures, caused the effects of this abolition to be at first not much felt. But after the peace, it was soon discovered that Havre had drawn to itself all the branches of foreign traffic, with very rare exceptions. The establishment of steamers on the Seine, and the *chalans*, large barges towed by the steam-vessels, then followed, and gave the finishing blow to the trade of Rouen.

The Seine between Havre and Rouen has some very dangerous places, and perhaps thousands of vessels have perished off Quillebeuf. Add to this, that the ebb and flood, extending to Rouen and still higher, prevented the formation of towing-paths; and thus the sailing vessels bound to Rouen, besides being exposed to the risks which they ran here, had to lie for weeks at Havre or Honfleur, waiting for a favourable wind. All these circumstances could not but tend to the disuse of sailing vessels between the sea and Rouen, as soon as the steamers began to run, and heavy goods could be brought up the Seine in the barges constructed for the purpose. Rouen then necessarily ceased to enjoy the commission trade between Paris, the interior of France, and foreign countries, as the barges can go direct from Havre to Paris.

This change of things was, of course, extremely disagreeable to Rouen and its merchants. Many of them, yielding to circumstances that were not to be altered, settled at Havre, and established houses

there ; but many more, incompetent to take a just view of the state and relations of the two commercial towns, remained at Rouen, and tried all possible means to swim against the stream. At the present day, the mercantile class in Rouen is characterised by its efforts to restore the former state of things by artificial means ; hence necessarily arises a direct opposition to Havre.

The old privileges are dead, but not forgotten ; they still haunt Rouen, puzzling the brains of the merchants, and disturbing their slumbers. Whenever opportunity offers, they strive to recall them to life, but they will scarcely succeed in reviving them for any length of time, and their exertions can only tend to retard the general progress.

In 1831, M. Rondeaux, one of the most eminent merchants of Rouen, who had shortly before declared that, if he were but thirty years old, he would immediately post off to Havre, wrote a pamphlet, to show the expediency of bringing the *cabotage* (the navigation of small craft from one French port to another) back to Rouen. He strove to prove that, in the first place, the disuse of sailing vessels on the Seine had greatly diminished the number of French seamen ; that, in the next, the direct transmission of goods to Rouen instead of Havre is cheaper and more advantageous to the shippers. According to his calculation, this advantage offered by Rouen amounts to many hundreds, nay thousands, of francs, according to the size of the vessels. In the *Journal du Havre*, this



calculation was impugned, and a directly contrary result was deduced. Leaving the task of verifying these calculations to those with whom they originated, I shall merely remark that, were they to turn out ever so favourably for Rouen, which is extremely doubtful, they could not alter the general circumstances detailed above which speak in behalf of Havre; for the difficulties, dangers, and loss of time incurred in the navigation of the Seine are of much greater consequence than a few hundred francs, as, in the time that it takes to go from Havre to Rouen and to return, you might make a trip to Bordeaux and back, or reach Marseilles.

The merchants of Rouen were aware of this, and M. Rondeaux therefore proposed, in order to obviate at least the risks and loss of time of the navigation of the Seine, to make the towing of vessels plying on that river a legal duty; that is to say, to obtain a law enacting that every sailing vessel on the Seine shall be towed by a steamer. The merchants of Rouen made a formal application to the Chamber of Deputies for this law for the benefit of a Société de Remorçage to be established at Rouen; but of course it was rejected, as no civic privileges are now suffered to exist, but only personal ones, and these disguised as much as possible under the mask of the public welfare.

But the spirit once prevailing in Rouen, the remembrance of the ancient privileges of the city, the removal of the foreign trade to Havre, and the opposition raised in Rouen to Havre by this state of



things, continued, and found frequent occasion to manifest themselves. In 1833, M. Elie Lefebure, in concert with several other members of the chamber of commerce, and some of the principal merchants, formed a society for the towage of sailing vessels up to Rouen. This scheme would not have been liable to objection, had not its promoters tried to obtain and actually succeeded in procuring for it a privilege which rendered competition impossible. This privilege consisted in the importation of an English steamer at a duty of 15 per cent., payable in two years, if the vessel should not by that time be exported again. The purchase of the steamer was made merely conditional; nay, the merchants of Havre even asserted that nothing more than an agreement for hire had been entered into with the English owners of the vessel. There were already eight French steamers exclusively employed in towing the *chalans* and the sailing vessels on the Seine, but the above privilege put it out of their power to compete with the Anglo-French steamer. It is well known that all foreign iron pays a very high duty on importation into France, and that French iron is considerably dearer. Steam-engines pay an import duty of 33 per cent., so that the duty on a single engine is from thirty to forty thousand francs, and often more. The Rouen society had contrived to evade this heavy tax, and could therefore offer much more acceptable conditions than any other steam-vessels, which were obliged to bring into account the interest of that capital. The

privilege violated moreover another law, which forbids the introduction of foreign ships, and enjoins their confiscation.

The merchants of Rouen, however, could not derive more than a temporary advantage from this privilege. At the expiration of the two years, the society actually sold the vessel, and things have since reverted to their former state.

The spirit of the mercantile class of Rouen has very recently been expressed on another occasion. A railroad from Paris to Havre would be a great accommodation to foreign trade, now that it has fixed its seat at Havre ; whereas, a railroad running from Paris no farther than Rouen would again make the latter city a compulsory staple. The merchants of Rouen have done every thing in their power to prevent the railroad from being carried beyond their city ; to this end they have induced the most eminent mercantile houses in Paris to take the lead, and loudly insisted besides on the superior political importance of their city. The mercantile class of Havre, in the conviction of the necessity of a railroad from Paris to that town, never dreamt of the exclusion of their place from its benefits ; till Rouen had so far gained the victory, that the plan advantageous to it was approved by the ministry of commerce and brought into the Chamber. Had the question depended on the minister, the point would certainly have been carried in the spirit of the Rouen merchants. But, as it rested with the Chamber to decide, the mere publicity served to

derange the plan of the Rouen merchants, and forced the adoption, at least in principle, of this condition, that the railroad shall be continued to Havre. The question between Rouen and Havre is, nevertheless, by no means settled; for the first plan was with cunning foresight so contrived that the continuation of it to Havre would have to encounter almost insuperable obstacles, rivers and hills, so that, if even the present plan should be accepted upon condition of the continuation of the railroad to Havre, the execution of that continuation will at least be delayed for a long time by the opposing impediments; and in the end it may be found necessary to have a second railroad from Paris to Havre.

The traders of Rouen, if not very rich, yet possess great influence by means of their manufactories, and the political consequence of the city. Their views, moreover, are directed rather towards Paris, those of the Havre mercantile men towards the countries beyond sea. Hence it is that Rouen gains so ready a hearing in the capital. Besides, Rouen, as a commercial city, is actuated by but one motive—opposition to Havre and the recovery of its ancient privileges; so that it can devote all its means, its influence, and its activity, to the accomplishment of this object.

Whenever a commercial question touching upon this separate interest of the Rouen and Havre merchants is discussed in France, it is necessary not to lose sight of this point of view, since it is from this

alone that one can rightly judge of what is going forward. Rouen and Havre are the representatives of hostile interests—the one that of commercial restrictions, the other that of freedom of trade, and its activity is displayed whenever occasion presents itself.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Manufactures of Rouen—Impressions produced by a Manufacturing Town—Factories—Treatment of Children ; its consequences—Immorality of Work-people in Factories—State and Moral Condition of the Weavers—Hardships of the Working Classes—Official Report of the Wants and Income of Persons employed in the Cotton Manufactures—M. Lelong's Memorial on the Distresses of Workmen—Decreased Consumption of Produce with Increasing Poverty—Schools for Children of Working-People ; their Insufficiency—Benefits of Machines ; Enmity of Factory Work-people to them.

So early as the seventh century, Rouen was a manufacturing town ; for St. Ouen makes mention of the cloths woven there in his time. It is now indisputably one of the first manufacturing cities in Europe. In 1823 it possessed no fewer than 95 spinning factories worked by water. In 1827, the rivers and rivulets of the department turned 2954 mills of various kinds. Among these were 1464 corn-mills, 223 oil-mills, 98 paper-mills. The number has since increased.

Rouen has given its name to a species of striped and barred cotton, which is known throughout all France as Rouennerie. The manufacture of cottons in general is one of the principal branches of in-

dustry in the department. Normandy was the first province of France in which cotton was spun. This was in 1700. In 1747 manufacturers of Rouen brought several Greeks to France, in order to introduce by their means the scarlet dye, then called India or Adrianople red; and they soon excelled their masters. The first machines for spinning wool were constructed in England, and their exportation was prohibited upon penalty of death. This, however, did not deter an English company in Rouen from importing the first machines, called little jennies, in 1776. These machines were gradually improved. In 1784 a *brevet* was granted by the government for a machine "d'une filature continue," and several were soon set up. In 1786, Vergennes, the minister, concluded a commercial treaty with England, which permitted the importation of English goods, and thereby gave the French manufactures a severe wound, from which they recovered only by degrees. In 1791, this treaty was annulled; but, for a considerable time afterwards, the manufacturing districts were in a deplorable state. The Revolution infused new life into the people; and so early as the time of the Directory this produced fine fruit; till at length, Napoleon, by closing the Continent, called forth the golden age of the manufactures. The Restoration put an end to it. England demanded, at the expense of the manufactures of France, the reward of her exertions for re-establishing the Bourbon throne; and Talleyrand, the most corrupt of the

corrupt, was not ashamed to proclaim that France was called to be an agricultural state; whence he inferred, to the advantage of her faithful allies, that England was to supply the agricultural country with her manufactures.

The government of that time soon perceived that by such a system it only made all France still more its enemy, upon which the principle of prohibition was again recognised, or rather retained, as the importation of English goods was never legally permitted, but had only taken place in the train of the allied armies. Thus confidence was gradually restored, and manufactures were once more thriving till 1828. Since that time they have again declined; and this falling off was attributed to the extensive contraband trade. At length, in 1829, an *enquête commerciale* was ordered, but hopes were the only results to which it led.

The Revolution of July found industry in a state far from satisfactory; and it is well known that for some time afterwards trade and manufactures were entirely at a stand. In the following year, upwards of 3000 operatives were employed in the *travaux de la charité* at Rouen, and a much greater number were without work and bread. Nothing could equal their distress but the heroic courage and the admirable resignation with which they bore it.

In 1832 better times succeeded, till in 1837 the effects of the crisis were sensibly felt. Upon the whole, however, the cotton manufactures in Rouen have been of late on the decrease. Labour is too



dear there; attempts have in consequence been made to found factories elsewhere, and their success at Marie aux Mines, St. Quentin, and other places, has led to imitation; so that these colonies are already beginning to withdraw her industry from the mother city. Whether this state of things is entirely owing to the high price of labour, the scarcity of work, the proportionably higher tax upon the necessaries of life by means of the *octroi*, or whether, as some maintain, it arises partly from the inferior intelligence of the manufacturers, I leave to others to prove or disprove.

In 1834, there were in the department of the Lower Seine 280 spinning establishments, which employed about 21,000 hands .....	21,000
In the workshops for the construction of the machines, there were employed as carpenters, smiths, turners, founders, &c. ....	5000
Weavers .....	65,000
Dyehouses .....	5000
Manufactures of coloured cloths .....	9000
Manufactures of cards for carding wool ...	2000
Total .....	107,000

If we add to these the different classes of labouring people and the shopkeepers, who live entirely by the cotton manufacture, we shall find that they amount to no fewer than 150,000 families, or 400,000 souls.

In every manufacturing town contradictory feel-



ings will arise in the mind of a reflecting person. He cannot suppress his astonishment at the industry, the endurance, of the people who here labour without intermission, at the intelligence that has regulated every thing, and that has made out of those thousands and thousands of hands one whole, one machine. Such is the first impression produced by a general survey, which excites only admiration and respect. A closer scrutiny of the details of the works of the great machine shows that these works, these wheels, are men, and a thrill of horror curdles our blood. The immorality of the factory-labourers is an almost necessary result of this state, in which the human machine learns to forget that it is man. Sixteen, twelve, nay, only eight hours of unintellectual, machine-like employment must by degrees extinguish the mind so completely as to leave nothing of the man but the animal part. Idleness is the origin of all vices, and the factory operatives pass their lives in continual mental idleness. The interior works, the mental machinery, of the man, stand still ; the hand alone moves. It is a question whether this evil can be counteracted even by mental activity out of working hours, by schools, for instance ; for these would not destroy its cause and its effects, and the very few who would really attain a higher degree of mental activity would soon be lost for the factories, and quit or perish in them.

The room of a factory in which children are employed presents a heart-breaking sight. The human

mind develops itself only when its activity is excited from without. External appearances lead to questions which it asks itself or others, which it answers itself, or which others answer for it. Without the external appearance, without this incessant inquiry of the child's, this grasping at every step after information, no mental development is possible. But, in a child which, from the age of six, eight, or ten years, goes day after day from home to the factory, and from the factory home again, which, weary in body, feels after working-hours no other want but that of food and rest, it is almost utterly impossible that the mind can develop itself in the slightest degree. It is a corporeal spectre, a body without mind. Indeed, schools are not capable of applying a remedy to this case; for it is not the school but life that develops the mental activity of the child. It would be a trifle to teach such children to read and write; but it would be a gigantic work to cultivate their minds; this, however, is not an affair of learning and teaching, but only of experience, of intuition, of the apprehension of external appearances, concerning which the young mind reasons with itself, and thus elaborates its materials. A boy whose life has consisted only in the alternation of labour in the factory and learning in the school, will, in a hundred times, not rise more than once above the level of the brute. Life is the school of life, and these wretchedly unfortunate children are torn from it, in expiation of Heaven knows what tremendous maledictions, to forget in the factory—nay, worse than

that, never to have a conception—that they are human beings; or perhaps to feel this for a moment, and to become, in the fury of their brutality, rapacious beasts.

But these are only general grounds; there are particular ones of a still more revolting nature. In the spinning-factories, the children are mostly placed under the adult workmen, two or three to each. This fellow, brutal, unfeeling, without a spark of mind, is their absolute lord and master. The slightest carelessness, which is attended with a trifling loss to him, kindles his rage, and is punished with cruel usage. Thus almost every spinner is the unrestricted master of a boy from seven to ten years old, and a girl from ten to thirteen; and very often the latter is not only forced to endure his brutal anger, but likewise to gratify his brutal lust. Lastly, during working hours, these children hear nothing but the disgusting conversation of their demoralised seniors. Such is their education, such their school, such their religious instruction. Oh! what would I not give that it were possible to prove me a liar, a slanderer of my kind!

You need but look at these boys and girls to see the horrible truth written in their faces in characters not to be mistaken. Unmitigated stupidity, malice, and sneaking vice, are impressed upon their features.

Neither does the body attain its due development in this preparatory school. The mayor of Marom took me to see a factory of this kind at that place, a league distant from Rouen. His son, six



years old, accompanied us. Health and childlike gaiety lighted up the features of this boy, and seemed to me to be a sort of scoff at misfortune, an evidence of their deplorable condition. He was both taller and stouter than the spinners at ten or twelve, and most of these were besides afflicted with scrofula, sore eyes, or some bodily deformity.

One boon, a cruel one it is true, but yet a boon, awaits these unfortunate creatures—an early death. Few attain the age of forty; most of them die before they arrive at thirty, and pulmonary consumption is very often the bridge which leads them out of this vale of misery. The work itself is extremely wearing; the hours, for children as well as adults, being from six in the morning till eleven at night, with an interruption of an hour and a half for breakfast and dinner; and in these factories there is in general a dust which settles upon the lungs and destroys them.

The females employed in them betray in every glance the most shameless immorality. I have seen there girls, whom, at their birth, Nature seemed to have destined to be handsome; and some of them still exhibited traces of this her intention. But the moment a smile played upon the beautiful lips, it looked like a blasphemy against that very beauty, and proclaimed the most impudent licentiousness; when the eye was raised, there burned in it fires that told of vice which could not reach a lower point of degradation. How could it be otherwise? The like cause has the like effects in this



case. The association of so many idle females—mentally idle, for indeed their bodies never rest—produces such a familiarity among them, that they have no secrets from one another. Each details her adventures of the preceding night, and thinks only of those of the next. The brutalized mind seeks pleasure after labour, and this pleasure is only that of the brute. Work is not over, summer and winter, till late at night; and when the hour of release strikes, men and women assemble in the court, or before the door, of the factory, and go off together to spend the few sous they may have left. A child scarcely ever knows more than its mother, nay, the mother herself very often does not know the father. One of my acquaintance once saw a spinner ill using his daughter, who turned complainingly to the bystanders. "*Le monstre!*" she exclaimed; "he can treat me in this manner! and since I was thirteen he has forced me to supply the place of a wife!" Enough! indeed too much! If I have exposed the wound, it is in the hope of directing to it the attention of those who have the power to heal it.

Where there happens to be a man among these human machines, he is an exception, almost a greater misfortune than the rule. These exceptions are gradually becoming less rare in France. And the cause of this is the education derived from life and events—certainly not from the school. The revolution of July, the insurrections in Lyons, the combinations of workmen, have shaken society in France to its profoundest recesses. The philan-

thropist cannot think without apprehension of the future destinies of manufacturing districts and towns, for their unnatural state will some day or other produce fearful consequences, unless the whole manufacturing system be totally reformed before it is too late; unless you make men of these machines, which are gradually beginning to attain consciousness, or can supply the place of men by real machines.

What I have said thus far has been chiefly the result of my own observation. At Rouen, a workman himself has raised his voice, and I will introduce him to the reader for a few moments. A weaver, named Noiret, published, in 1836, a small pamphlet entitled, *Memoires d'un Ouvrier rouenois*, from which I shall extract one or two passages.

Noiret seems, at least when he speaks of the weavers, to be a competent judge. He describes their workshops, "They are small and low, and hermetically closed like a coffer, that the dry air may not penetrate into them. They are generally dark, and so situated that the sun can never shine into them. They are likewise extremely damp, and part of them are real cellars; these are commonly preferred by the weavers, who are not aware how pernicious they are." It is a prejudice, he says, to imagine that damp places are fittest for the operations of the weaver, which require such as have a moderate temperature, and are neither too dry nor too damp. It is scarcely necessary to add that the most robust health would be destroyed in the cellars which he describes.

“The diseases to which, from their business, the weavers are most liable are scrofula, weakness in the legs, debility, and pulmonary complaints. The scrofula is produced by the damp places in which they generally work.” They are mostly ailing and unhealthy. The above-mentioned causes operate so speedily that the voice of a youth of seventeen or eighteen is hollow and insonorous, so that a weaver may easily be distinguished by it from all other artisans.

Having peeped into their dwellings, let us follow them to their meals. “Part of the weavers live in public-houses,” says Noiret, “but the great majority of them with their families. Their small earnings do not allow them to have wholesome, sufficient, and regular food. Breakfast frequently consists of dry bread, to which they often add a quarter of a pound of Neufchatel cheese. As their means forbid cooking for themselves, their wives and children go to the auberges, which are commonly called *gargotes*, to fetch a little wretched soup and boiled meat, or bad *ratatuille*.” The French language of higher society has no conception, and I, of course, no translation for this term. The supper is much the same.

Respecting the moral condition of the weavers, Noiret gives the following particulars. “The weavers are industrious, and they are obliged to be so; for, even if they make the best use of their time, they must dispense with much that is necessary. A man is not disposed to take a walk, when



he has had a scanty dinner, and, besides, cannot dress decently. It is true that there is a certain number of working men who cannot refrain from keeping holiday on Monday. This ancient custom has unfortunately struck such deep root among the operatives in the city, that it will not be very easily eradicated. But, if people are not at work, they must be doing something else, and so they go to the pothouses to drown the little sense they have left in spirituous liquors of bad quality. Indeed, I cannot conceive how people who have nothing to eat can find pleasure in drinking."

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that in such a state of things a working man cannot think of cultivating his mental faculties. "As the wages of the workman are insufficient, he is obliged to work from fifteen to eighteen hours a day, and of course he has no time to improve his mind, nay, he never thinks of that, so deeply is he bowed down by his unfortunate situation; and to procure it for him, it would be necessary to abolish—of course, by degrees—privileges, monopolies, and prohibitions, as these crush industry, and increase the price of the raw materials and the necessities of all kinds which the workman stands in need of; or, what would be better still, his wages should be raised beyond his expenditure, so that he might lay by something. Then, relieved from present embarrassment and anxiety for the future, he might hold up his head, know himself, and become a man; then would he see that, in a civilized nation, like our's, natural



talent is not sufficient, and that it must be cultivated if one would not sink to the level of the brute."

I feel no call to express my opinion here upon the means by which the state of the working class may be improved, and merely mean to exhibit the views of a fellow-sufferer. Let others examine whether he is right or wrong, whether he proposes a plaster only, or a radical cure.

Distress, necessity, here rend asunder the ties which Nature has elsewhere declared sacred. The father discards the son, and the son the father. "A detestable custom," says Noiret, "has crept in among the most uncultivated class of the working people in Rouen. When children have reached the age of twelve or thirteen, and often earlier, they make them keep themselves, that is, subsist upon their earnings, and so much the worse for them, if they do not earn sufficient, which is always the case. But the children, in their turn, repay the parents in the same coin; for, when the latter are ill, they send them to the hospital, instead of assisting them to the utmost of their power; and when they are old and incapable of taking care of themselves, the children give them up entirely. Through this custom, the members of a family are like so many strangers; and the children, left to themselves, have bad morals, which are transmitted from one generation to another."

This is horrible! Poverty, armed with the keen sword of hunger, stands at the door of the paternal dwelling, and prevents the children from crossing

the threshold to seek the protection of the mother who gave them life ; and the same terrific figure stands at the door of the child, to drive back the distressed mother, when she comes to ask her own blood for shelter and protection, and a crust of bread to appease her hunger !

A life of suffering, of incessant toil, terminates in a beggar's death. "The workman," says Noiret, "when he is fifty, ceases to be sought after ; he may indeed find employment here and there, where articles are made which are adapted to his strength, but for which a very low price is paid. He continues to work so long as his sight and strength enable him, and so long as he can earn sufficient to supply his most urgent wants. When he is obliged to give up work entirely, his last resource is a custom which has existed in the trade from time immemorial, namely, to call upon those who follow the same business, and to obtain from them some trifling contribution. The more acquaintances he has, the more he picks up ; but he never has enough of them to collect fifteen sous a day, and then the necessity of running all over the city occasions a fatigue that is too much for his strength. A few are admitted into the *hospice*, but not before they are seventy, and then they are frequently obliged to wait several years till there is a vacancy. To them this *hospice* is a prison, which they are allowed to leave but once a month, and they are besides subject to degrading regulations. Hence, though at that age a man's spirit is broken, there are those who

choose rather to suffer privations and to retain their liberty."

Noiret then indulges in the following reflections: "In France, the aged and the poor who are unable to work have no other resource but public charity. It is not enough that they have vegetated for a whole life, incessantly tormented by anxiety about the coming day; they must, even when no longer capable of work, crawl from door to door to ask for that which is not due to them, and to die of hunger, and that too in a country which dares call itself civilised! If such be the consequences of civilisation, infinitely preferable is the state of savages, for among them, at least, man has no duties to perform towards whomsoever it may be; he is perfectly free, and can indulge all his wishes. I know that efforts are making in individual places to extirpate beggary, but this is not done universally; and, so long as no provision is made in France for the support of the real pauper, I adhere to my position.

"According to the public prejudice, the relief afforded to the indigent is considered as charity, and the government itself shares this prejudice. I would ask whether you conceive that you are bestowing charity in granting a pension to the soldier who has earned it by thirty years' service. Assuredly not, you will say, because he has served the country. Now it seems to me that a man serves his country when he is useful to it, no matter in what way. And, in my opinion, an artisan who has worked for fifty years together has been quite as ser-



viceable to it as a soldier who has been for thirty years under its colours. For if arms are necessary for the defence of a country, they are just as necessary to feed it and to provide for its wants. And if the working man has given his youth and his toil for the community, it is bound, on the other hand, to supply him with bread when he is unable to earn it, and has nothing left to procure it with.

“In regard to the ailing and infirm, who could either never work at all or but little, society owes them also a subsistence: for *in society not a creature ought to suffer hunger.*”

And who will venture, with those pallid figures before his eyes, those children thrust by their mothers from their homes, those fathers to whom their sons refuse a morsel to keep them from starving—who will venture to contradict the blunt champion of silent misery?

One might imagine that the working man, who thus complains of his own condition and that of his fellow-sufferers, had laid on too harsh colours: I shall therefore quote another source, which is not liable to suspicion.

In the archives of the Mairie of Rouen is deposited a “Report presented on the 15th of January, 1829, to the Sub-Commissioners of Inquiry, on the questions addressed to the manufacturers of Cotton Stuffs by the delegates of that branch of manufacturing industry, Messrs. Talon, Gambu-Delaure, Jacquet, and Lelong.” It contains, by way of appendix, a “Statement of the annual wants of a



working man of Rouen, compared with the resources which he can procure by his labour during the same period." This statement is as follows :—

“ WANTS.

2½ lb. bread, per day.....	45 cent.
Cheese or Herring for breakfast	10
A portion from the <i>gargottier</i>	
for dinner.....	20
Drink.....	20
	—
	95 cent. per day.
	—

Per Year.....	346 fr. 75 cent.
Clothes.....	60
Washing .....	15
Casual Illness .....	10
Lodging .....	50
Candle .....	6
Fire, one <i>foyade</i> at 50 cent. per	
day .....	26
	—

For one workman, per year..... 513 fr. 75 cent.

If the workman has two children from seven to ten years old, who earn but little, and often even prevent the mother from working, the personal expence of the father is increased by at least one-third of the total ex-

pence, with the exception of  
candle, fire, and lodging..... 107 95

Total ..... 621 fr. 70 cent.

If the children are under seven  
years old, so that they earn  
nothing and take up all the  
time of the mother, there is a  
further increase of expences by

at least as much more ..... 107 95

Total ..... 729 fr. 65 cent."

#### " INCOME.

" The usual wages, 1 franc, 75 cent., amount in a year to 525 francs, so that the workman who has only himself to provide for may have a yearly surplus of 11 francs. If he has two children, from seven to ten years old, in the circumstances assumed in the above statement, there is a deficit of 96 fr. 75 cent. If he has two children, under seven years old, this deficit is increased to 204 fr. 75 cent.

" All these unavoidable expences are those of a workman who has no implements or materials to find. When he has to find a variety of petty articles, as is the case with the weaver, for whom there must further be taken into account the rent of a place for his loom, and the time which he loses in carrying home his work, his expences are increased 30 cent. at least per day, or 90 francs per year.

" Thus every unmarried workman has in this

case a deficit of 79 fr. 75 cent. ; a father of two children from seven to ten years old a deficit of 186 fr. 70 cent. ; and lastly, a father of two children under seven a deficit of 294 fr. 65 cent.

“ Melancholy as the result of this table is, we must further remark, that we have set down 20 cent. for the loaf of bread, whereas it costs 24 cent. ; that we have stated the daily wages at 1 fr. 75 cent., while they amount at most to 1 fr. 50 cent.—that we have supposed the workman to be employed all the year round, while many can find only occasional employment, and a great number none at all—that finally our calculation applies solely to unmarried workmen, or such as have but two children. Hence you may judge, if you can without shuddering, what must be the situation of a workman who has three, four, five, or even six children.”

The Report then concludes thus: “ Humanity therefore requires, as the first relief due to the labouring classes, the abolition—and as speedily as possible—of the indirect taxes and the *octroi*, which, if it is absolutely necessary, may then be imposed on the wealthy classes without exception.

“ In presenting these painful reflections, in which we have been constantly guided by an ardent desire for the maintenance of order and tranquillity, let us take the liberty to add : Happy will it be if the too long subsisting misery of the great number does not in the end call forth dangers for those who have never acted otherwise than for their own interest.”

Let me once more remind the reader that it is no



French operative, no republican, but members of the municipal council, one of whom is still adjunct of the mayor, who here lift up their voices in behalf of their distressed countrymen.

I need scarcely remark that since the presentation of the Report in 1829, every thing has been left just in the same state that it was. In December, 1831, M. Lelong, adjunct of the mayor of Rouen, and one of the members of the above-mentioned commission, drew up a memorial entitled, "Considerations on the Distresses of certain Classes of Workmen, particularly in the department of the Lower Seine," which was likewise presented to the municipal council, and is deposited in the archives of the Mairie at Rouen.

In this Memorial the author gives tables, showing the expences and receipts of the factory work-people, of the wages paid them for the different sorts of work, and those paid to weavers, and another exhibiting the expences and income of one hundred workmen in a factory with a steam-engine of twelve horse-power, for six months:—

"We see by these tables," says the author, in his remarks upon them, "that the wool-spinners are better off than the weavers"—the number of whom, not earning sufficient to maintain themselves, is calculated by M. Lelong at 65,000. "Nevertheless, out of 100 employed in a factory worked by a steam-engine of twelve horse-power, 60 are not able to procure the most urgent necessities, as in six months they are minus 2094 fr. 74 cent. The other 40



have, on the other hand, a surplus of 2749 fr. 50 cent. But we must bear in mind that all these are supposed to be unmarried, or widowers without children, free from all incumbrance, and having only themselves to provide for. If each of them had an aged father, a wife, or daughter, incapable of work, one or several children, to support, how different would be his situation ! I must also observe, that these calculations, already melancholy enough, are made from the wages paid in one of our best manufactories in the city, and if there are others in which equal regularity and economy prevail, which have as good implements, and whose arrangements are as perfect, I can affirm that it is not surpassed by any. No one can doubt that these circumstances permit the workman to earn more. In those which are not in the above predicament, the number of workmen who cannot earn sufficient to pay for the most urgent necessities must inevitably be much greater. The smaller spinning-factories, the machinery of which is worked by hand, by horses, and even by fire-engines, which are liable to accidents that compel the work-people to stand still, number few or none that can live by the produce of their labour.

“ Individual optimists may perhaps tell me that all this is not possible ; that, if the produce of labour is not greater than is here stated, the wants of the workman are likewise not so considerable, or he must long since have died of hunger and misery. To these I reply, that in the expences of the workman I have included his lodging, which he does not pay ;

his clothing, which he does not renew once in two years; the washing of his rags, which he wears in their dirt; that he sends his children into the streets to beg; that he himself, instead of spending 95 cent. for his food, lives upon one sou's worth of bread and one of potatoes, and that he gets his drink at the nearest pump.

"Let me then ask them, in my turn, if there are many domestic animals which work so hard and so long, which are so ill fed, so ill lodged, and if most of these unfortunate creatures must not envy those animals the very straw on which they lie?"

The author then shows that the consumption of all the productions of the country has fallen off with the increasing poverty of the working classes, and strives to prove that the merchants, shopkeepers, and agriculturists, are suffering from the same cause. He proves the inadequacy of workshops and factories of beneficence, and thus concludes:—

"The landed proprietors must support the government in all the measures that it employs to remedy this evil. They are all responsible partners in a great concern, which is suffering, languishing, and declining: it behoves them then to unite their talents, their efforts, and their sacrifices, not only to prevent great losses, but perhaps to obviate a tremendous catastrophe, which may perhaps advance with redoubled speed as the evil increases. Wo to society when, out of obsequiousness, selfishness, or want of courage, people flinch from difficulties! Have not means been found to give the emigrants

a thousand millions? But who has the better right to claim such a sacrifice—he who defended his country under all emergencies, without ever betraying it for gold and honours, or he who . . .

“The rent of houses in Rouen, even in the most frequented quarters, has already fallen one-eighth; and it will not be long before a like decline takes place in the country. Should any one conceive my statements to be founded on error, let him confute them. But let me beg that none would turn away his eyes to spare himself the pain of beholding the deplorable state of our social position.

“If I were asked whether I foresee what will happen if things are suffered to go on as they have done for some time, I would answer, without reserve, that I think I can foresee it, but I dare not say what I see in the future. I shall only repeat that I have spoken of a volcano, which may open and swallow up those who have no foresight, unless France, the great nation, like a man attacked by consumption or any other insidious disease, languishes, falls, and dies, without a struggle. But this is not probable, not possible. A colossal giant cannot perish like a frail, weak creature. Before he expires, he will muster all the force of his wonderful muscles, and leave behind him traces of his tremendous strength. In conclusion, I say, ‘Solve the riddle of the Sphinx, or she will tear you in pieces!’”

A startling denunciation this! The future here appears before us like an awfully dark thunder-



cloud, and the insurrections in Lyons were only the first flashes that burst from its womb.

Had this been written by a self-styled friend of the people, he would have been called to account for it at the assizes; for these friends of the people, *par excellence*, have too often shown that they love only one part of the people and hate the rest. And this hatred has parched and destroyed the seed, even the good seed, which they sowed, for love alone is fruitful. And out of love to all, we ought to take under our protection those who suffer, and show those who do not suffer that we are defending their own cause when we strive to relieve the distresses of one class of the people, that we provide for the future safety of the rich by bettering the present condition of the poor. But to pretend to serve the latter by cursing the former is insulting humanity, and perilling its interests. These, however, are not the most dangerous enemies of the existing order of things. It has more dangerous ones, namely, those who will not even acknowledge that the Sphinx of time has given the present a riddle to solve. They will have to repent their infatuation, if, as the author of the above Memorial apprehends, the Sphinx should become a ravenous beast.

Since 1836, however, the state of the factory work-people in Rouen has improved. Superior hands among the wool-spinners now earn about 2 fr. 50 cent., and though the crisis produced a stagnation, the manufacturers seem not to have been obliged — perhaps, indeed, as the insurrections in



Lyons made a deep impression, and roused the workmen to a sort of consciousness of their strength, they did not dare—to reduce the rate of wages, but only diminished the work, which, after all, comes nearly to the same point for the workman. The daily earnings of the weavers, on the other hand, are upon an average from 1 fr. to 1 fr. 30 cent., so that, even when they have constant work, they must be continually in arrear, and live at the same time in the most penurious manner.

But, if a momentary improvement has taken place, other circumstances may arise to-morrow, and produce changes, as in 1831. The wound is only cicatrised, not healed; nay, it seems as if it were only spreading further and deeper beneath the eschar.

But how is it to be healed? Ay, there is the fearful riddle! And then our timid homœopathic age and world, which recoil with fear and trembling from every radical idea, every radical cure! Were I acquainted with the means of solving the riddle, and to communicate them, the narrow-minded mortals would cry out, “Stone him! the blasphemer!”

I shall therefore advert to only one, and that the worst side of this evil—the children. In all the manufacturing cities and towns of France have been established schools, into which the children of the work-people are admitted gratuitously. But this measure has produced little fruit. I have already observed, that I doubt the moral benefit of such schools, when the children are obliged to work the

greater part of the day in the factory, and are there exposed to the brutality of a spinner. But the opportunity for instruction is not even embraced. At Marom, near Rouen, a manufacturing village of 3000 inhabitants, there are schools of this kind, and only three children of poor persons, and fifty of inhabitants in easy circumstances, attend them, though they have every thing gratis. The cause of this circumstance, as far as the poor workmen are concerned, is self-evident. They earn only just sufficient to support themselves, and therefore are compelled to send their children, as soon as they are strong enough, not to the school, but to the factory. These earn there from six to ten sous for sixteen or seventeen hours' work. Even this small sum the parents cannot afford to lose by sending their children to school. The community—consider that this is one of the points involved in the riddle of the Sphinx—might forbid children to work longer than half a day in the factory, and compensate the family for the wages of the other half, for the hours which the child passes at school. It would then have time to learn while playing, to go to the school of life.

Perhaps statesmen may not relish this proposal, and I am almost afraid that they will not. Let philanthropists then unite and do what must be done, if they would not have brutality combine sooner or later with misery and semi-consciousness of it to form a rapacious beast.

The greatest benefactors of mankind are the inventors of machines; and the inventor of the first

spinning and weaving machine ought at the least to be inscribed as a saint in the calendar of humanity. The savages, the ancients, would have made him a god, and I know not that I should have taken any great offence at the worship paid to him. Every manufacture carried on by hands is a cancer in society, which spreads, and corrupts whatever it comes near. Machines are the salutary knife which cuts it out. This excision is painful, like operations in general: it disfigures the part on which it is performed; and its first consequence usually is a wound-fever: but the wound heals, and the body regains its health. So long as all factory labour is not performed by machines, society will not be healthy; so long as a considerable number of the inhabitants of a country perform the service of machines, that whole country will feel the consequences; its citizens will become brutalised; part of them will subsist by the annihilation of the others, and the latter will found their last hope on the destruction of the former.

The factory work-people are the most inveterate enemies of machines. The first spinning machine brought from England to Rouen in 1787 was destroyed by the workmen in 1789, and, whenever a new machine was imported and set up, a fresh riot took place. Had they been but half aware of their situation, they would have presented a civic crown to the man who introduced it. But they are only sensible that they are themselves machines, and that they are partially rendered superfluous by new



ones. I cannot think that I have a hard heart, but I verily believe that, if to-morrow, all factory labour were to be performed by machines, and all the work-people were for a time doomed to still greater distress than they now have to struggle with, I should not be more pained than I am at present ; for I should derive a powerful consolation from the idea that many thousands could no longer say, as Lebreton, who, though a calico-printer in a factory, has continued to be a man and made himself a poet, sings in one of his compositions :

*La pensée a brisée mon ame,  
Le travail a brisé mon corps.*



## CHAPTER XXIX.

Artisans; their desire of information—Lectures established by the Society of Emulation—Spirit prevailing among the Operatives of France—Anticipations—Efforts for the Reformation of Juvenile Offenders—Messrs. Lecointe and Duhamel establish a School in the prison of Rouen—Formation of a Society for bettering the condition of young Convicts—Success of its Exertions—Visit to the School—Awful Idea suggested by it.

THE artisans of Rouen stand on a much higher step of the social ladder than the factory workmen. The revolution of July has produced a most extraordinary effect upon them. In Paris it was chiefly they who decided the conflict, and persons of this class, coming from the capital, diffused by their narratives the spirit which had excited them to action there. This circumstance has upon the whole increased their self-esteem, and that is a benefit; for he only has any worth who values himself. The prominent part taken by the public press has also produced an effect. A considerable number of the artisans throughout all France soon attached themselves to the different oppositions, and these distributed among them political writings, some good, others bad. The universal consequence was an increasing desire to inform themselves, to

read ; and thus the artisans constitute at present the majority of the subscribers to all the cheap editions of the French classics. You may be sure of finding at the lodgings of most of them a tolerable store of knowledge, and a little library, containing Buffon, Corneille, Beranger, J. J. Rousseau, Courier, &c. And whatever we may think of one or other of these writers, still we cannot deny that the money expended on their works is better laid out than if it were spent as formerly at the *cabarets*.

The desire of information awakened in the class of artisans was soon productive of this effect, that men belonging to the higher classes of society felt themselves called to gratify it, as far as lay in their power. Never was there yet any want of devoted hearts, as soon as they were seriously summoned to act by the spirit of the time and circumstances. Such was the case here.

In 1834, the Société d'Emulation in Rouen proposed to give public courses of lectures on commercial law, book-keeping, and geometry, and disinterested friends of the people came forward to offer their time, their labour, and their talents. In the first year, these different lectures were attended by 216 young tradesmen, artisans, and even a few factory labourers, namely, commercial law, 72, book-keeping, 92, geometry, 52 : and the prizes offered by the above-mentioned society were gained by a tinman, a shopkeeper, a porcelain-worker, and a smith, in commercial law ; by a porcelain-worker, a shopkeeper, and weaver, in book-keeping ; and by a

cloth-presser, two young shopkeepers, and a last-maker, in geometry.

In the following year, 1835, two other courses of public lectures were instituted by the municipal council,—on natural philosophy by M. Duboc, and on chemistry by M. Girardin. I have frequently attended the lectures of the latter. The first time I arrived as the clock was striking twelve. I had reckoned upon the academical grace of a quarter of an hour, but I had miscalculated. The hall was crammed; the very stairs and windows were crowded with auditors, as if to catch the words of the lecturer in their flight. It was literally my lot not to hear any of them. Next Sunday, I went half an hour earlier, and found just one vacant place. Full four hundred artisans, working men, shopkeepers, and even elderly citizens, were assembled, and listened with a devout attention, such as I had never witnessed in my own country at the lectures of the most eminent professors.

The two lecturers on chemistry and natural philosophy published their Sunday lectures every week. Of M. Girardin's popular chemistry a thousand copies were printed, and by the close of the year there was not one to be had; so that the lecturer, who certainly undertook the duty as a labour of love only, made in the end a good speculation of it. While I was in Rouen, a new edition of his chemical course, of 3000 copies, was in the press. This single fact says more than any thing that I could add.



Individual workmen and artisans have been enabled, by the instruction received here to better their condition very materially. A weaver has been appointed *instituteur primaire* ; a calico-printer has set up for mathematical master, and as such is sought after by the best schools in Rouen ; a clerk in a manufactory has become, after a brilliant examination, surveyor of the roads in the department of the Lower Seine. I could mention other instances of the like kind, but these may suffice.

In France the desire for information is almost universal. Only furnish the workmen and artisans with an opportunity of learning, and they will throng to avail themselves of it. Not long since, one hundred and fifty working men at Elbeuf presented a petition to the municipal council, praying that it would make arrangements for public lectures on natural philosophy and chemistry to be held there, as they were in Rouen.

I became acquainted at Rouen with a journeyman printer, who entered into correspondence with Guizot, while minister, respecting the Sources of French History, publishing under his patronage, and who proved to him that the work of an author—I have forgotten his name—mentioned in the prospectus as inedited, had been given to the public in the works of Leibnitz, upon which this author was struck out of the list. Such an instance, indeed, is but an exception, perhaps an accident : on the other hand, the effects of the eagerness of the labouring class in France to improve itself are every



where apparent. The papers recently published a letter from one who had been a working man to Beranger, and the answer of the latter to the former, who, through Beranger's poems, had become a musician, a composer, and a teacher of music. I have already mentioned Lebreton and Kilbey. A cooper in Dunkirk has sung the sea and its shores; a cabinetmaker at Fontainebleau the forest and its ancient trees; a baker at Nimes, the ruins of Roman edifices in his native town; and a hairdresser at Agen, of love in the tone of the troubadours.

A new life pervades the entire body of French operatives, and this movement must certainly have some day a considerable influence on political affairs. That influence indeed is already active, and it is only the dull eye which is incapable of perceiving the germ till it has grown up into a tree that can overlook it. What may be the consequences of this metamorphosis of one of the most important classes of the people, it is impossible to foresee: all then that one can yet do is to call attention to the matter. Those who come after us will possess the means of appreciating both.

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We have seen what a wretched life the children of the factory work-people lead, that they are turned out by their parents when very young, that they work as long as they can get employment, and starve when there is none to be had. Without any moral cultivation, it would be a wonder if a con-

siderable number of them were not brought annually before the courts of justice, to account for the offences into which they have been led by distress and by their moral condition.

From the year 1832 to 1835, 171 children were sent to the prison of Rouen, the Bicêtre; of these 61 were born in Rouen, 12 at Dieppe, 8 at Havre, 5 in Paris, 10 at Elbeuf, and the other 75 in different communes. The number is large enough; but it must be confessed that, considering the descriptions given of the state of the work-people in Rouen, the only wonder is that it is no larger.

These young criminals were, till a few years since, left to themselves, or rather to the instructions of the adult prisoners grown grey in guilt, as they still are in most of the prisons in France. When once they had crossed the threshold, on account perhaps of a theft committed from distress, or vagrancy, their destiny was fixed; they were marked out for the career of crime, which led a great number of them to the galleys. Between the years 1826 and 1831, 233 young criminals of this kind were released from the Bicêtre; 137 of them relapsed into their former courses, and 50 were sent to Gaillon, the central prison of the department of the Eure, or to the galleys.

It is grievous to see how long systems universally condemned as vicious can be allowed to subsist. There is scarcely a reflecting person in France who has not heard or read a hundred times that it is a real crime to leave young offenders to themselves or to

the example of practised villains; who does not know that it is a duty incumbent on society to attend to these unfortunate creatures, and to provide for their future welfare by education and habits of industry. It is nevertheless but rarely, and only by way of exception, that any thing is done to lead them out of the path of guilt. If one could survey the entire course pursued by the murderer till he became sufficiently hardened in guilt to raise the fatal weapon, we should find but too often, perhaps twice out of three times, that on society itself falls the responsibility for that crime, on account of which it at last inexorably demands the life, or at least the liberty, of the culprit.

All this is the more painful when we see how little is very often needed to alter, to amend. Two gentlemen of Rouen, Messrs. Lecointe and Duhamel, furnish a striking proof of this in regard to juvenile offenders. They observed their deplorable condition, resolved to improve it, and devoted a portion of their time to this purpose. On the 1st of February, 1833, they proposed to the gratuitous cantonal committee for primary instruction in Rouen to establish a school of mutual instruction in the Bicêtre; on the 21st of the same month it was opened, and those two philanthropists themselves undertook the task of giving the requisite instruction to the juvenile prisoners. From that time they were without intermission the directors of the school, gave lessons for several hours every day, and soon carried their plan for the reformation of the young culprits



still farther. On the 13th of May, 1833, they proposed to the mayor to assign 4,000 francs to the administration of the prison for the purpose of establishing shoemakers', tailors', weavers', and cabinet-makers' workshops. The proposal was adopted.

Instruction and employment were the means by which they hoped to secure the future welfare of their protégés. But it was not sufficient to transform the young culprits in the prison into new creatures by these two levers, if, at the expiration of their confinement, they were to be turned out into the world without protection or provision, and loaded with the curse of that prejudice which rests upon every one who has been the inmate of a prison. Of this their two patrons soon became thoroughly sensible; and so at their instigation there was founded, on the 26th of December, 1833, a "*Société pour le patronage des jeunes libérés*," which in the first year collected 2780 francs, and 10,199 till the 1st of June, 1835.

Messrs. Lecointe and Duhamel continued to superintend the instruction of the boys as before; and the Society undertook to provide places for them after their liberation. On these points I shall quote a few words from the reports of this society. In regard to the first, we are told: "The position of the juvenile prisoners is totally changed within these two years. They have a consciousness of good and evil; the instructions which they receive make them acquainted with their duties towards



God; they pray together, and devoutly attend divine worship. Almost all of them can read, write, and cipher; the rest of their time is devoted to the learning of a trade, and several of these youths have been placed out as journeymen and are earning their living."

With respect to the providing of places for the offenders on their release, the report of the Society for 1835 says, "The two-fold remark—that young criminals are more numerous in manufacturing towns than in agricultural districts, and that greater morality prevails in the latter—has led us to perceive that the young convicts on their liberation ought as much as possible to be employed in agriculture, that they may be the less exposed to bad company, and become habituated to an industrious life. But an impediment that is frequently met with prevented the execution of this plan.

"The majority of these convicts have been from their youth left to themselves; they have had to endure all the consequences of indigence, and their physical powers have suffered. You would be in general mistaken if you were to estimate their age from their personal appearance. Others prefer less laborious occupations, and we are obliged to give way to their inclinations on this point, as it would not be advisable to change their vocation.

"The prejudice which rejects the liberated convicts is likewise deeply rooted. How many refusals have we not met with! How many are there who entertain philanthropic sentiments in theory and

deny them in practice ! This disposition, however, has neither surprised nor deterred us.

“ But if we have experienced many refusals, we must, on the other hand, do justice to the humane disposition of those who have accepted our proposals. Artisans little favoured by fortune were generous and confiding ; our convicts, admitted to the domestic hearth, became children of the family ; they here found good advice, and the best instruction for practising their trade. One of these artisans said to us with emotion, ‘ I was myself a forlorn orphan without resources. A benevolent man took pity on my situation ; he generously taught me his trade, and it is no doubt owing to him that I have become a good citizen and a good father. I will now repay what he gave me.’ He has kept his word, and trained a clever workman, whose livelihood is secured and whose conduct is exemplary.”

Farther on the report says, “ Wherever it has been possible, we have endeavoured to re-knit family ties. Thus many children have been given back to their parents, and their position secured by means of succours cautiously granted.”

Thus instruction, work, the habitude of it, a trade, and, as far as possible, a secured livelihood, are the means employed to give back the young convicts to society, and to guard them against a relapse. The results for a number of years have been as follows :—

pressive, prayer, which the other boys devoutly pronounced after him. The young commander then gave orders for leaving the dining-room. His subordinates, the serjeants and corporals, repeated the word of command, and the little troop left the hall in military step. In this manner, they marched through the first court into a larger, where they drew up at the command of their leaders. Here each corporal examined his division, ascertained whether clothes and shoes were in a good state, whether hands and faces were duly washed, and noted down any rent in jacket or trowsers, and any neglect of cleanliness. At length the commander ordered them to break their ranks, on which the lads were allowed to walk about in the court for half an hour, which they did three, four, or five, arm-in-arm together. One of the serjeants, *l'officier du jour*, retained the superintendence, in order to prevent any thing improper.

I must confess that at the first moment this military system made a disagreeable impression, though I was not disposed to find fault. I had seen something of the sort in private schools, and there found this apish mimicry as contemptible and unpractical as possible. To make military puppets of children is a mortal sin, a relic of the Napoleon mania, which is far from being entirely banished from France. But here, in the prison, on further consideration, the thing did not appear so unpractical. The greater number of these boys were vagabonds, accustomed to the most disorderly and irre-



gular life. To habituate them to order, regularity, and cleanliness, is certainly one of the most difficult tasks of their teachers, and I believe that it would not be easy for them to devise any better way of accomplishing this object than to subject the pupils to strict military discipline, though, in some respects, it is certainly liable to objection.

When the time for recreation was over, the voice of the serjeant-major called the convicts again into rank and file, and they marched to the school-room. I need not enter into the mode of proceeding in a school of mutual instruction. The convicts here learned reading, writing, and arithmetic, and a considerable number of them had already arrived at a degree of perfection in those three branches of instruction, which is rarely attained, and scarcely ever surpassed, in the lower schools.

For the improvement of their morals they receive religious instruction; but the principal point, after all, consists in the daily admonitions of their philanthropic teachers, in employment, in the instruction itself, in order, and, lastly, in the gradually-awakening consciousness that they are no longer abandoned by God and the world, and in the knowledge of the sacrifices that worthy men are making for them. The good conduct of the convicts procures them the different ranks of serjeant-major, serjeant, and corporal, by which their youthful ambition is soon kindled, and they are impelled to better courses. Lastly, the Society, from time to time, makes the best, most diligent, and best-behaved scholars a



present in money of 50 or 25 francs, which is deposited for them in the savings' chest.

Before I left the prison, I went with M. Duhamel to see the brushmakers' workshops, where the boys work after school-hours under the direction of a master from the city; for, of course, the young convicts are kept as much apart as possible from the other prisoners.

I must own that I have seldom visited a public institution from which I have carried home with me a feeling of such profound satisfaction. It not only did my heart good to think that so many unfortunate creatures were here regained for society, but perhaps, in a still greater degree, that the good-will of two excellent men was sufficient to produce this result. The first step only is difficult, and costs sacrifices; this once taken, all is accomplished, and the rest is only a question of earlier or later. Messrs. Lecointe and Duhamel formed the plan of bettering the condition of the young convicts, and because they set about the work in good earnest their efforts were successful. They became themselves the teachers of the prisoners, and the results from this beginning followed almost without any exertion. Workshops were established, and a Society instituted to provide for the future subsistence of the convicts.

Thus all that could well be done has been performed for the department of the Lower Seine, and there needs but another step to communicate the benefits of similar institutions to all France. For

this effect, indeed, the powers of an individual are inadequate; but when we see that the Society for the Patronage of Juvenile Convicts is applying to the government for the erection of central prisons for its protégés throughout all France, and that this application is founded on the most incontestable, the most triumphant results; if the speedy establishment of such central institutions is no longer doubtful; it is the more evident that a public benefit, if but a single individual sets in good earnest about effecting it in his own limited sphere, will soon force itself into general notice and adoption. Mark this well, ye philanthropists!

On my way home, I passed a factory, which I had visited on the preceding day, and there a new idea darted across my mind. It was this: It is evident then that a factory workman in Rouen, if he loves his children and has their welfare at heart, must say to them: "Go and steal!" Shocking! and the truer the more shocking. Is it not as if man is forced to show his neighbour by deeds that he has it in his power to do him an injury before that neighbour will give himself any concern about him? In Rouen, there are thousands of children of working people who are turned adrift in the world without any instruction, who share hunger and cold with their parents, whose bodies and souls are alike ruined by the most unnatural toil from their earliest youth. Not a creature cares about them. Not till the moment that they become criminals does the community deem them worthy of notice, and

then in general only to subject them to the rigour of the law, but here in Rouen—thanks to the interference of the humane—to treat them kindly, to instruct them, to give them a trade, and to provide for their future welfare. In France, you may frequently hear of persons who commit some petty offence, that they may find in prison a protection from cold and hunger ; and if there should really be erected all over the country institutions for the support and instruction of juvenile criminals, it would be very extraordinary if, by and by, fathers did not say to their children : “ I love you, and, because I love you, I desire you to steal ! ”

So long as the community does not attack the root of the evil, so long as it does not strive, instead of healing external ulcers, to purify the juices of the body, so long will it be affected by local complaints of that kind. But from the day that society, instead of providing for juvenile offenders, shall take under its protection the juvenile non-offenders, who have the misfortune to be marked by the stamp of its wrath as future pupils of criminal schools, shall instruct them, keep them to work, and provide for their future welfare, from that day criminal schools must be superfluous. And “ to this complexion must it come at last.”—The Sphinx ! the Sphinx !



## CHAPTER XXX.

Spirit of the People of Rouen—Antiquity of the City—Piety of its Ancient Inhabitants—Society for building and finishing Churches—Fraternity of the Immaculate Conception—Legend of an Adulterous Canon—Prizes for Compositions on the Immaculate Conception—The Privilege of St. Romain—Right assumed by the Clergy to save one capital Convict every year—Ceremonies observed on the occasion—Popular Almanacs—La Bibliothèque bleue—The Lovers' Catechism—Catechism of Marriageable Girls—General Character of the People in and around Rouen.

A HOUSE, four walls, a door, two or three windows and a roof—a street, a double row of houses—neither more nor less. And yet, only cast your eyes on these stone and wooden coffins of the living, only stroll through a street, and you know, or can at least guess, of what spirit the inmates are the offspring. If Rouen reminds us of the old German imperial cities, this resemblance is not merely external; the people, who dwell and still dwell in those houses, who traverse those streets, are much alike in both. The spirit of commerce is that of a free imperial city, which, after the lapse of ages, cannot forget that it once belonged to the great German Hansa;



that of Cologne, for instance, which a few years since exerted itself to the utmost to prevent the loss of its right of staple. The citizen of Rouen is a *bon-vivant* too, though the Frenchman in general is no match in this respect for a burgher of Frankfurt, Munich, or Vienna. A dinner in Rouen is a real affair of state ; and there is in that city a regular cramming season, during which all the gossips of both sexes give invitations to one another. Thirty dishes for eight or ten persons, and twenty-four for dessert, are a mere bagatelle.

Cologne was formerly called "the Holy City," and Rouen, "la Ville de la Vierge." In Cologne, there were as many churches as days in the year ; in Rouen, just one hundred years ago, there were sixty-one churches and chapels, and forty-eight convents of monks and nuns. The inhabitants of Rouen, like the Normans in general, were extremely pious. We find in their history at every step traces of their catholic sentiments.

In the middle of the twelfth century, an association was formed at Chartres for building new churches, and completing such as were begun ; and this masonic fraternity found in Normandy a more cordial response than any where else. In all the towns and in every village it met with willing helpmates. Men and women joined it, confessed and communicated, forgave their enemies and asked their forgiveness, before they were admitted into the society. The superior of the brotherhood gave directions where they were to work and what they

were to do. Accordingly, great and small, rich and poor, male and female, harnessed themselves to the cars, and, singing hymns, and regardless of storms and weather, drew them, laden with stones and timber, with which the masons and carpenters erected gothic churches, the offspring and witnesses of that enthusiasm, the tombstones of Catholicism. The archbishop gave his blessing to all who joined the fraternity, and the people told of miracles which attested the power of this benediction. The people, the great mass, were still stanch believers; but the more knowing, the masons, the masters, guessed already what was to happen. And they chiselled their doubts upon the cathedral itself, in those bold figures which we meet with in almost all gothic churches, and which satirised the dissolute lives of the monks and nuns.

This enthusiasm was the last flickering of the flame which had once given light to the world, and it did not last long enough to finish the greater number at least of the larger edifices, such as the cathedral of Cologne, and the church of St. Ouen at Rouen. But when the work was completed, or only half completed, the people stood in wonder before the gigantic structures which they had seen rising from the earth as if by magic, which they had themselves assisted to build. And next day, no longer comprehending the power which had created these edifices, they related that the devil had built Notre Dame in Paris and the cathedral of Cologne.

The completion of the half finished gothic cathe-

drals has often been under discussion. And if this were still possible, it would be a crime against the spirit of history, which speaks out so plainly in them in their present state. They were a ruin before they were finished, because the spirit which had created or imagined them was dead, before they could be completed.

Another fraternity in Rouen, which had branches at Caen and many other places in Normandy, was that of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. The people of Rouen have done a great deal to gain for their city the name of "*Ville de la Sainte Vierge*." Her image once stood at the corner of every street, on the outside of every house; and many of these images have survived the Revolution, which, upon the whole, was much less severe in its persecution of such figures than the Reformation. The fraternity of the Immaculate Conception was really a society for the propagation of the worship of the Virgin Mary; and such was its success in Normandy that her festival soon went by no other name than "*la fête aux Normands*."

How this fraternity originated it is impossible to say, unless like me you give implicit credit to popular tradition. But in this case that authority is not consistent. Some assert that William the Conqueror sent an abbot Helfin to Denmark, and that he, having in a storm offered up a prayer on the immaculate conception to the mother of God, was saved by the Virgin, and instituted the fraternity in honour of her. Others maintain that a nameless



canon of Rouen was its founder. The history, as given in the *Legende dorée* (edit. 1531) is as follows:—

The pious canon prayed often and fervently to the Virgin Mary. But the good man was of flesh and blood, and so the devil once played him and his patroness a scurvy trick. He kindled a flame in his bosom, which made him forget, on the other side of the Seine, both the canon and Mary, and the immaculate conception, and drove him into the bed of the handsome wife of a peasant. The malicious fiend was no doubt highly delighted. Having come to the Seine, on his way back to Rouen, the adulterer got into a boat; there he again became the pious canon, and began praying his *Horæ* to the Virgin. But the devil was impatient to carry home his plump, goodly prey; so, as the reverend man was pronouncing the words, “*Ave Maria, gratia plena,*” he capsized the boat, and hastened with the soul of the sinner the shortest way to hell, where he had to suffer three days for his peccadillo. On the fourth, the Virgin Mary took pity on him, and summoned the devil before her. The chronicle must have had a shorthand-writer at the examination, for the questions and answers are given verbatim.

*Mary.* Why dost thou thus unjustly afflict the soul of our servant?

We ought to have it, replied the spirit of darkness, because it was caught doing our works.

*Mary.* If the soul of this canon ought to belong



to the one whose works it was doing, then it ought to be our's, for it was reciting our matins when ye seized it, and ye are the more guilty for having acted towards us with so little consideration.

Now, it seems to me—and I have studied the law—that, according to all the principles of jurisprudence, the devil was in legitimate possession; but even in the other world it is perhaps difficult to enforce one's right against queens. Be this as it may, the devil was frightened out of his wits, and scampered off. The Virgin Mary then took the soul of the canon on her arm, and carried it back to its body; whereupon the Seine, in which the corpse still lay, parted, and thus the canon was enabled to walk dry-shod to the bank. On reaching it, his reverence made the following speech to Mary; which, as it would lose much in translation, I give in the original words: “*Ma très chère Dame, Vierge toute belle, mère très agréable de Jesus, mon divin Maître, que vous rendrois-je pour les bienfaits ineffaçables dont vous venez de me combler? Vous m'avez delivré de la gueule du Lion, et mon ame de tourmens très cruels de l'enfer.*” The Virgin replied: “*Je vous prie de ne pas tomber dorénavant dans le peché d'adultère, de peur que votre dernière fin soit pire que la première. Je vous prie encore que dans la suite vous célébrez la fête de ma conception le 8 Decembre et que vous la fassiez célébrer partout. Amen!*” From that time the canon turned hermit, and was the first and most zealous propagator of the festival of the immaculate conception.

Pious as were the brothers and sisters of this society, they built no cathedrals. Those days were past. On the contrary, the fraternity was turned, in honour of the immaculate conception, into a sort of academy, which awarded annual prizes for those who had best sung, described, or discoursed on the event. During the 15th century, a prize, consisting of a palm, was first offered for the best poem. Towards the close of the same century, (1493) a second prize—a hat wreathed with laurel—was added. At a later period, the best ballad gained a gold rose, the best ode a silver looking-glass, the best sonnet a gold ring, and the best epigram a laurel wreath. Lastly, a Monsieur Jean Baptiste Boisin, Seigneur de Bonnetot et Conseiller du Roi, et premier président de la cour des comptes, aides et finances, assigned a gold cross for the best French discourse, that should last not less than a quarter of an hour, treating of the immaculate conception. Nothing was to be introduced into it from fables or poetry, and the proofs of the circumstance were to be derived only from the bible, ecclesiastical history, and natural history. I took a good deal of pains in searching for such a speech, as I should like to see the natural history evidences; but my trouble was thrown away.

I have read droll poems on this subject, which, if they were to be printed now-a-days in Rome, would be regarded as at least high treason against the Virgin Mary, and punished as such by the Christian judges of the popish capital. The devil of irony peeps out of every line of them.

The people of Rouen, however, took all that was said for pure earnest; and when, in 1528, one Pierre Barrus made himself merry about the simplicity of the good folk, they were furious, seized the delinquent, accused him of blasphemy against the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mother, and burned him without mercy after a short trial.

The clergy of Rouen saved many other culprits by the privilege of St. Romain, also called the *privilège de la fierté*. This archbishop, whose history swarms with miracles, went forth to encounter a dragon, which was making great havoc in the environs of Rouen, and, as he could not find a priest to accompany him, he took for his attendant a murderer under sentence of death. This man strangled the formidable monster with the bishop's stole. In commemoration of this miracle, and of the aid received by the saint from the criminal, the clergy assumed the right of saving every year a delinquent, with the exception of persons guilty of high treason, whom not even a miracle could deliver.

A short time before Ascension Day, three canons of the chapter went to the prisons, heard the confessions of all the prisoners, and wrote them down. On Ascension Day, they again repaired to the prisons, to see whether any fresh prisoners had arrived, and then went to the assembled chapter to read their reports, after the chapter had sung *Veni creator spiritus*; whereupon, it proceeded to the choice of the criminal who was to be pardoned. The chaplain of the fraternity of St. Romain carried the



name of the favoured culprit to the parliament, which, after a solemn musical mass, opened the paper containing the name, and had it read to them. They then went through the proceedings afresh, condemned him, and informed him of his pardon. He was now delivered up to the chaplain of the fraternity, who, accompanied by the councillors and the civic guard, led him away, removed the chain from his legs in the street, and put it into his hand, after which he went with him to St. Romain's chapel. The people assembled for the procession went thither too.

Meanwhile, tidings of the confirmation of the pardon were carried to the chapter. The bells of the cathedral proclaimed this confirmation, on which the church was opened, and in presence of the congregation the written confessions of all the prisoners, excepting that of the pardoned criminal, were solemnly burned. The confession of the latter was delivered to him. All the relics in the city were collected, and, headed by those of St. Romain, borne before the chapter, which went in solemn procession, preceded by the archbishop, to the chapel of the saint. Here the archbishop addressed a discourse to the pardoned man, and, after he had recited his *confiteor*, laid his hands on his head, and granted him absolution. He was then conducted to the shrine containing the relics of St. Romain, which he had to lift up thrice, on which, crowned with flowers, and followed by the clergy and the multitude, he carried it to the principal church. Here mass was read, and



the whole assembly then returned to the chapel of St. Romain, where mass was again read, and where a priest held a discourse to the people concerning the criminal, his crime, his penitence, and his pardon. After this address, the priest, in token of reconciliation, handed a goblet of wine to the pardoned man, who drank it off, and finally went with the master of the fraternity of St. Romain to his house, where he supped and slept. Next day, he went once more to the principal church, heard mass in presence of the assembled chapter, and confessed, on which an ecclesiastic addressed another discourse to him, and he was formally dismissed.

It is refreshing to meet the clergy in such a career, and the more so as they have been oftener actuated by revenge than mercy. I have described this ceremony circumstantially, that the reader may compare it with the auto-da-fés of Spain, and ask himself, whether those flames, those shrieks, and those moans of the victims can produce a more powerful, or rather a more moral, effect upon the people than the touching scene where a priest looses the chains of a prisoner, where he presents him to the multitude as a victim rescued by religion, and, with the word pardon in the mouth of the people, exhorts to penitence, to amendment.

The whole ceremony, moreover, is characteristic of Normandy, as the auto-da-fé of Spain. In Normandy, too, victims of religious fanaticism have fallen in times of excitement, when the first ideas of reform began to be developed, when the quarrels

between the Calvinists and Catholics led to civil war; but never could the Inquisition strike permanent root in a soil in which the tree of liberty stood more firmly than almost any where else. For this reason, the clergy sought and found a different sphere of action, and went forth in procession, not to auto-da-fés, but to pardon a condemned criminal; and hence they held a festival of mercy, not of blood.

The faith of the Normans was always mixed up with a strong dose of superstition. You need but turn over the law journals of France for a single week, and you will be sure to meet with some Norman trial for witchcraft, which, indeed, does not terminate in the burning of the witches or wizards, but only in their committal to prison as swindlers.

It is in the country that superstition more especially prevails. The principal, nay, frequently the only books possessed by a peasant, are a prayer book and an almanac. These almanacs are of essential utility to enable one to form a correct judgment of the people, because they are written in their spirit, and correspond with their wants and circumstances. A few extracts from the "Almanach de l'an 1835," printed in Rouen, will therefore not be uninteresting. It contains recipes and sayings for every thing. It predicts the events of the year:—

De St. Paul la claire journée  
Nous dénote une bonne année;  
S'il fait vent nous aurons la guerre  
S'il neige ou pluit cherté sur la terre;  
Si l'on voit fort épais les brouillards  
Mortalité de toutes parts.

It then gives a "Prognostication perpetuelle, composée par les anciens philosophes, comme Pythagoras, Joseph le Juste, et plusieurs autres," showing, according as the first day of the year is Sunday, Monday, &c. whether the year will be prosperous, rich, poor, warm, whether there will be war or peace, and what not.

The almanac is the doctor of the people :—

Si tu fais tirer de ton bras  
Du sang le jour de Matthias,  
Il sera net tout l'année  
Sans fièvre te tiendra sain  
Jusqu'au retour de l'an prochain.

And again :—

Le jour de St. Gertrude l'on se fait doit  
Faire saigner au bras droit,  
Celui que ainsi fera  
Cette année les yeux clairs aura.

But, in spite of his superstition and of his belief in the oracles of dice and chance, the Norman continues to be upon the whole a tolerably practical man, and usually retains a pretty good share of what the French call *bon sens*, and we common sense. This the almanac attests in two or three specimens.

Lever à cinq, dîner à neuf,  
Souper à cinq, coucher à neuf,  
Faites vivre d'ans nonante-neuf.

Un œuf d'une heure seulement,  
Pain d'un jour, oiseaux bien petits,  
Chair d'un an, poissons de dix,  
Cela fait vivre longuement.



Qui a bon lit, dedans ne dort,  
 Qui a bon pain, dedans ne mord,  
 Qui a du bien, n'en prend confort,  
 Autant vaudra-t-il qu'il fut mort.

This practical sense, combined with the benevolence peculiar to the Normans, though frequently disguised beneath a repulsive coldness of manner, I have again met with in a song sung by the little children in the streets of Rouen, while at play, to this effect :—

St. Pierre, St. Simon,  
 Gardez notre maison ;  
 S'il y vient un pauvre,  
 Baillez li [lui] l'aumone ;  
 S'il y vient un pelerin,  
 Baillez li de notre vin ;  
 S'il y vient un larron  
 Baillez li du lourd baton,  
 Pipi—i—i—i—i—i.

In the towns, the above-mentioned almanacs have ceased to possess any exclusive authority ; still there are people enough there who never give a treat or take an excursion till they have consulted an oracle of this kind ; and they frequently do the same on occasion of more important matters. Upon the whole, however, their influence is on the decline ; the hawkers cry them in the streets as *almanachs merveilleux*, *almanachs menteux*, &c. Of late years, too, the patriotic almanacs, the Napoleonic and republican, have gained the ascendancy in the towns, and found at least partial encouragement in the country, so that they threaten in time wholly to supersede the old ones.



The Norman towns, and indeed the provincial towns in general, have of late become more and more French. French levity, gallantry, coquetry, have gained a firmer footing in Rouen itself. I shall adduce evidence to this point also from the popular literature. There were published at Rouen, at the beginning of this century, a great number of popular books, called by the editor, M. Labbey, *La Bibliothèque bleue*. One of these books was entitled "Catechismus des Amants, par demandes et reponses, ou sont enseignées les principales maximes de l'amour et le devoir d'un veritable amant." In the first of these dialogues we find the following :—

*She.* Are you a lover ?

*He.* Yes, by the favour of Cupid.

*She.* What is a lover ?

*He.* A lover is a person who, after he has made a sincere and true declaration, seeks to make himself be loved by her whom he loves.

#### SECOND DIALOGUE.

*She.* What are the signs of a true lover ?

*He.* Attention, assiduity, sincerity, punctuality, and billets-doux.

*She.* What is sincerity ?

*He.* A strict accordance between what we say and what we mean.

*She.* What do you understand by the word billets-doux ?

*He.* A little compliment in writing which we

send to our mistress, when we cannot find an opportunity of conversing with her, &c.

## FOURTH DIALOGUE.

*She.* At what age may one begin to love?

*He.* Boys at 14, and girls at 12, according as they are forward for their age, &c.

## FIFTH DIALOGUE.

*She.* How many kinds of happiness are there in love?

*He.* Seven.

*She.* What are they?

*He.* 1. Happy are the lovers who truly love, for he does not feel the joys of love who is but moderately penetrated with it.

2. Happy are the lovers who are strong and hearty, for they are loved the longer and the more highly esteemed.

3. Happy are the lovers who are fond of laughing, for in love there are too frequent occasions for grief, without needing to be ill-humoured besides.

4. Happy are the lovers who have *esprit*, for they enjoy pleasures which the silly do not feel.

5. Happy are the lovers who have patience, for it is very difficult to find a mistress who grants at the first moment what the lover desires.

6. Happy are the lovers who are rich, for love is prodigal of money.

7. Happy are the lovers who have no rivals,

for they have the favour of their mistresses to themselves.

To judge from this specimen of the popular literature, we must confess that the people of Rouen have gradually become Frenchified enough.

Another of these books is called, "Catechismus des grandes filles pour être mariées, ensemble matière d'attirer les amants." I subjoin an extract from this.

*Question.* What is the sacrament that is most necessary for great girls?

*Answer.* Marriage.

*Q.* At what age ought the handsome to be married?

*A.* In general at 16 or 18.

*Q.* Why at that age?

*A.* For fear a mishap might befall their honour.

*Q.* But at what age ought those who are not handsome to be married?

*A.* The moment a young man asks for them, they ought not to let slip a good opportunity, &c.

In this catechism there is a very pretty litany, which might be recommended to the fair sex in other Catholic countries.

Kyrie, I desire

Christe, to be married.

Kyrie, I pray all the saints

Christe, that it may take place to-morrow.

St. Mary, every body is getting married,

St. Joseph, what have I done?

St. Nicholas, forget me not.

St. Medicis, O that I had a good husband !  
St. Matthias, that he might fear God,  
St. John, that he might love me dearly,  
St. Francis, that he might be true to me,  
St. Andrew, that he might be to my taste,  
St. Didier, that he might be industrious,  
St. Honoré, that he might not be a gambler,  
St. Severin, that he might not be a drunkard,  
St. Clement, that he might be hard-working,  
St. Nicaise, that he might be kind to me,  
St. Jesse, that he might give me a carriage,  
St. Boniface, that my marriage might take place  
St. Augustin, to-morrow morning.

*Prayer.* O Lord, who madest Adam of the dust and gavest Eve to him for a helpmate, send me, if it pleaseth thee, a good husband for my helpmate, not for the sake of sinful lust, but to honour thee, and to have children who may praise thee. Amen.

Indeed, it is difficult to say whether all this is irony, or what else it is intended for. So much is certain that there was a time when the fair damsels of Rouen studied this catechism much more diligently than the Napoleon-Catholic. These books are now nearly out of fashion, but you may soon convince yourself that the females of Rouen have no need of the catechism quoted above, that they are prepared for any examination, and that the precepts inculcated in it have been gradually transfused into the blood. Besides, I have no wish to play into the hands of those who vituperate the pre-



sent age. Robert *le magnifique*, in his time, made mention of a *fons meretricum*, and of his *custos meretricum* in Rouen. The thing then is ancient, and it is only the tract, the catechism, that is an innovation.

At present, it almost seems as if the ladies of Rouen, and indeed the French in general, were becoming more grave. I was at a ball, and observed that scarcely a lady above thirty years old was dancing. I was struck with this circumstance, and in secret bitterly reproached the gentlemen, both young and old. Determined to make a sacrifice and to shame them, I asked a very handsome woman of thirty-two to dance ; but she assured me that she was obliged to decline my invitation, having given up dancing because she was too old. When I expressed my surprise at this to a friend, he coolly replied, "*Nos grandes dames sont des begueules*, as an honest peasant would say." It would be difficult to translate the word, which signifies much the same as : "They would like well enough, but—"

But it is time to close the pleadings, and to sum up. The people in and around Rouen, like most of the Normans, were once extremely devout. Some of them are still so ; at least, they have not lost all faith : in this case, they are superstitious, put confidence in chance and luck, seek counsel from that when their understanding is at fault, possess nevertheless a due share of common sense, heart and feeling, are disposed to mirth, and fond of the

pleasures of the table and the bottle. Time has opened their eyes upon many points, and they are gradually relinquishing what is antiquated, and betaking themselves to the new patriotic almanac. Though the *grandes dames* occasionally act the prude and will not dance, yet the unmarried scarcely need the Catechism of Love, for they know it by heart, and teach and learn the truths which it contains in the *école mutuelle* of their elder sisters and brothers.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

History of Rouen and of Normandy in general—Atrocities of the Frankish Sovereigns—Fredegonde and Brunehilde—Murder of Pretextatus, archbishop of Rouen—The Carlovingians—State of the People at the time of the Invasion of the Normans—Character of the Invaders—Designs of Louis d'Outremer upon Normandy—Influence of the Norman Institutions—Insurrection of the Peasantry—Conquest of England—Influence of that Event on Normandy—Its state under the Successors of William the Conqueror—Normandy becomes a French Province—Rights and Privileges of Rouen confirmed to the City.

IN Havre you need but look at the houses to be convinced that the town has no history, though its historians may do so to prove the very reverse. In Rouen, from the first moment that we begin to thread our way through the narrow streets, a contrary feeling pervades the mind ; and at every step we are detained by a house, a church, a broken stone introduced into the wall of a new building, which remind us of other times, other customs, and other ways of thinking. In the cathedral, we are met by the shades of the Norman dukes and the once powerful archbishops of Rouen ; the Palace of Justice reminds us of the Echiquier of Normandy, and of the Germanic law-institutions in which it

originated ; yon fountain is the monument of the Pucelle, who here received the fire-baptism of her greatness ; and all those houses proclaim the energy and manliness of the citizens of Rouen, and tell how they had the spirit to preserve their independence, even in opposition to their princes.

The history of Rouen, the representative of the Norman bourgeoisie, around which the history of the whole country revolves, is lost in the hoary antiquity of tradition. The name of Rothomagus, which it bore in the time of the Romans, and which no doubt sounded barbarous enough to Roman ears, attests that before they were masters of Gaul it was a place worth naming. Scholars squabble about the origin of this name ; but the Church decided that it was derived from the idol Roth, and sang for above a thousand years, *Extirpato Rotho idolo*, though it is now placed almost beyond doubt that neither god nor idol of the name of Roth ever existed there.

It is not till the time of the Franks that the annals of Rouen become more interesting, as part of the bloody drama in which Brunehilde and Fredegonde were the principal heroines was acted here.

The Roman maritime provinces of Gaul, to which belonged the country afterwards called Normandy, shook off the yoke of Rome at the beginning of the fifth century, and managed till the conclusion of the same century to maintain their freedom and independence under chiefs of their own choice. Clovis at length conquered the country, which, under his



successors, witnessed a series of crimes in the family of its rulers, such as can scarcely be paralleled in the history of any nation or any age. Of these atrocities, Liquez, the historian of Normandy, presents a hideous summary. "The history of this period," he says, "is full of murders and slaughter. If you would see one brother strangle another, a son stab his father, a father murder his son, a husband kill his wife, the conqueror his vanquished foe, and throw him, his wife, and his children, into a well; a king of the Franks (Thierry) invite a king of the Thuringians, (Hermanfroy) to a consultation, and hurl him from the top of his castle; a father order his son to be burned alive; monks attempt to assassinate their bishops in the night; bishops deposed in the assembled council for adultery and murder; women resort sometimes to the dagger, at others to poison, in order to rid themselves of a disgraced husband or a dangerous opponent—if you would see a picture of these and many more crimes, you need but turn over the annals of the Franks from Clovis to Charlemagne. In reading the accounts of these cruelties, enormities, and murders, you fancy that you are wading in blood, and expect at every step to stumble over a corpse."

In the history of Rouen, the character of this period is portrayed to the life. Chilperic, king of Neustria, married Fredegonde, after he had caused his first wife, Galsuinde, to be put to death. Sigebert, his brother, and husband of Brunehilde, Galsuinde's sister, was urged by his wife to revenge the

death of his sister-in-law ; and after he had defeated his brother in battle and driven him from place to place, the latter and his wife could devise no better way of saving and revenging themselves than assassination. Queen Fredegonde summoned two of her pages into her presence, and said to them : " Go to Sigebert ; pretend that ye are come to join him, and watch for an opportunity to kill him. I will load you and your's with honours when you return. Should ye perish, I will distribute abundance of alms for you at the shrines of the saints." This was enough. The poisoned dagger, which the queen delivered to the murderers, pierced Sigebert, just at the moment when he was proclaimed king of Neustria.

Bruneilde, after the death of her husband, was banished to Rouen. Here Chilperic's son saw his aunt, fell in love with her, and they were married by Pretextatus, bishop of Rouen. The revenge of Fredegonde and Chilperic overtook them. Both hastened to Rouen, enticed sister-in-law and son out of the church in which they had taken sanctuary, caused the latter to be put to death, deposed the bishop, and sent him into exile. Seven years afterwards, Chilperic was murdered in his turn, and Pretextatus, after the people of Rouen had expelled Melance, his successor, was reinstated in his dignity. Fredegonde now came to Rouen, to pass her widowhood there. Her revenge was not appeased. Pretextatus was stabbed at the altar by assassins, while not one of the assembled priests had the

courage to hasten to his assistance, and thus to excite the displeasure of the king's widow. One citizen of Rouen only durst accuse her and call her to account : a poisoned bowl was his reward. She had the audacity to visit the dying bishop, to see whether the wound was mortal, and he said to her : " Who could have committed this crime but one who has murdered kings, and so often spilt innocent blood ! I shall die, and thou, the author of the crime, shalt be cursed from age to age, and my blood shall be upon thy head." His prediction was fulfilled.

These events in Rouen characterize the whole epoch of the foundation of the Frankish dominion in Gaul. When one surveys all these crimes and cruelties renewed from day to day, and propagated from generation to generation, one asks in astonishment what can be the moral cause of them, and the answer generally is, that they were owing to the rudeness of the people, ignorance, and the want of civilization. But this answer is in contradiction to history. A few centuries earlier, such deeds among the Germans, who then were assuredly less polished, less civilized, and among the Franks in particular, would have excited the abhorrence of the whole nation ; for, at the time when such events were occurring in France, nothing of the kind was taking place among the Germans living in Germany. A few centuries afterwards, we see similar phenomena recurring in Italy, and at a still later period in Russia, where great advances had already been



made in civilization : but in all these countries such phenomena appeared at a moment when the internal circumstances of the State were nearly the same.

The ancient Germans recognized only the general interest, to which all private interests were subordinate. The individual was lost in the mass. In war alone they acknowledged the supremacy of one man. Incessant hostilities accustomed them more and more to this acknowledgment, and thus we soon see sovereign families arising. They were virtually kings, but the idea of royalty had not penetrated into the mass of the people any more than into those sovereign families themselves ; and thus people and kings considered the interests of sovereigns as mere family interests, their wars as mere family quarrels, in which the people took part in general from habit alone, or from a love of war, or for the sake of booty. Quarrels between the ruling families were in the regular course of things confined to those families, and the importance of the interests at stake accounts in some measure for the atrocity of the means employed in defence of them, because they led more speedily and more surely to the proposed end.

On the overthrow of the republics in Italy, this phenomenon recurs between the families claiming the sovereignty ; and in the North our forefathers witnessed the like spectacle, because the people there were not yet penetrated with the idea of royalty. As soon as this idea had taken firm hold of the people and the rulers, those crimes disap-



peared, or at least became exceptions; and we see subsequently another epoch, the reverse of the former, in which sovereigns, great as well as small, laid waste countries and towns, whenever they had a dispute to settle. And, horrible as was the time in which we meet with the bloody spectres of a Brunehilde and a Fredegonde, the historical inquirer, while perusing the events of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, might be tempted to wish it back again, at least on this particular account.

How little the idea of royalty had at that time taken root among the people is shown by the deposition of the Merovingians and the elevation of the Carolingian line. A family had found means so to augment its power and consequence as soon to be able to counterpoise the ruling family. The preponderance once gained, the weaker of the two was obliged to yield to the stronger. But Charlemagne was the first that laid the foundation-stone of royalty in France and Germany. This, however, could not be done but at the expense of the Germanic principle. Among the Germans, the entire state reposed upon the popular courts, which were the only legislative, judicial, and executive authority. Charlemagne's wars and the tricks of his courts turned this right into an oppressive burden for the people; and thus he was soon enabled to undermine this basis of the Germanic institutions, and to deliver up the courts to judges appointed by the king. The shade of Rome conquered the greatest hero of Germany, and was

destined thenceforward to hold Germany itself in subjection. The people and their constitution were lifted from their hinges, and had no intrinsic support till the fundamental idea of Charles had gained a footing. Hence the moral weakness, after his death, of the once mighty kingdom of the Franks; hence the indolence and degeneracy of those same Franks, who had so recently subdued the bravest of the brave Germans—the Saxons. The innovations of Charlemagne were a positive revolution; and their necessary consequence was that, under the new order of things, every one sought a place for himself, in which he could acquire other rights instead of those which he had lost. Hence the selfishness of the great, and their vices, and their crimes; hence, too, the indifference of the people to all that happened; hence, finally, their moral torpor, which opened to the Normans the way into the heart of France.

It is not requisite to state how this change operated; a descendant of Charlemagne's, Charles the Bald, dispenses me from that task. He described the state of the country in the following terms, at a council held at Pitres (Pistis), five leagues from Rouen: "Foreigners consume our country before our faces; the devastations of the enemy turn it into a desert; the inhabitants are slaughtered and dispersed; the churches and towns are converted into ruins; the bodies of our holy intercessors are torn from their graves; the servants of the Lord are driven from their asylums, . . . . .

because we have opened our hearts to the devil ; because we have rent from our souls the blossoms and fruits of faith, hope, charity, and all the other virtues ; because we have slain ourselves with the sword of sin ; because we glow in the fire of avarice, rapacity, envy, adultery, and other crimes, *non solum per naturalem sexum, sed etiam per sexum qui est contra naturam* ; because we do not withstand the attacks of the Evil One ; because we sell justice, and it is not to be obtained but by means of presents."

It may be assumed with tolerable certainty that the clergy had prompted this speech of Charles the Bald's ; but, mystical as it is, still it is clear enough to portray the state of the country. What he says in regard to justice only tends to confirm the views expressed above.

The more the seed deposited in the ground by Charlemagne developed itself, the more plainly it showed the nature of the fruit that it would produce. "Royalty, sunk into contempt"—one might rather say, not having yet been transfused into the constitution of the people—"was but a title without power in the hand of a man without mind. Under Charles the Simple, who was on the point of creating a duke of Normandy, the great could without difficulty render an authority, which had previously been personal and temporary, hereditary in their families. The lords of the second class joined without obstruction the banner of the leader whom they preferred to the others. Hence that multitude of despots, who treat as their equal him who should



be their sovereign, and whose kingdom at the end of the tenth century might be said to be confined to the town of Laon. Hence that ambition, that disorder, that hatred, and those intestine wars; those acts of violence, the only medium of compassing objects; and all those crimes which were sure of impunity. In vain did twelve prelates, and among them the bishop of Rouen, strive to remedy these evils. Their attempt had no other result than to furnish striking evidence of the incorrigibility of the clergy, and the weakness of the king. 'We are bishops,' said they, 'but we by no means perform our duties as such. We neglect our vocation as preachers. The flocks committed to our care forsake God; they do what is wrong before our faces, and we say nothing. If a reproof displeasing to these rude minds escapes us, they turn against us the words applied by our Lord to the Pharisees, and say, 'They bind oppressive burdens on the shoulders of men, but will not stir a finger to remove them.' The church of God is going to ruin through our silence. Where are the sinners whom we have converted?''\*

Charlemagne had politically annihilated the people. The above-quoted voices of the times describe the state of the nobles and the clergy. At this moment, the Normans made their appearance, and the country fell a prey to them because there was no longer a people to oppose their invasions. Without taking this state of the country into consideration, it is absolutely impossible to conceive how a few thousand

\* Liqueur I. 64.—Concil Frool. ap. Lalbe et Cossart, t. ix. col. 523.



northern pirates could traverse unmolested and lay waste the kingdom of the Franks; for though the former were very brave, still the Franks had shown often enough that in this respect they were not inferior to any nation, that they had no need to fear the Moors, the terror of the South, any more than the Saxons, who were the scourge of the North.

It is not my intention to recapitulate the events of the wars of the Normans with the Franks. The reader may find them in every historian, and there see how separate parties first arrived, plundered on their own movement, and returned home with their booty: how that booty enticed fresh invaders, till at length, Rollo, a Norwegian, with a force composed chiefly of Danes, landed in Normandy, and soon forced the king of France to conclude a peace (that of Claire d'Epte, in 912) by which Normandy was ceded to him by France as an independent duchy, on condition of his embracing the Christian religion. Whether, or in what form, Rollo did homage to the king of France, is a disputed point with historical inquirers; and the majority regard the accounts given in the chronicles to which I have alluded in another place as mere fables. At any rate, this is one of those fables which describe the acting persons, and which, even if invented by the people, are of great interest to the historical student, who wishes to appreciate a given period of time. For the rest, all these particular circumstances are of less consequence in themselves than as effects of the immigration of the Normans into France upon the institutions of the country and the state of the

people. I subjoin a few words concerning the civilisation of the Normans at the period of their arrival in France.

All the chronicles of the time, with rare exceptions, speak of the Normans as rude, savage, pugnacious, bloodthirsty barbarians. These invaders had no historians, for their business was fighting, and so they left their enemies to describe them. Much must be charged to this account. But, no doubt, they really were terrible in war. For many centuries after them, the law of the conqueror was invariably written with blood. But, on closer examination, it appears that, in regard to civilisation at least, the Normans were not behind the mass of those whom they subdued, and that, in regard to morality, manliness, and a sense of justice and duty, they were far before them. The ancient popular songs and traditions of the Normans need not shrink from a comparison with any thing that the bastard literature of the half Romanised French has produced. We see, moreover, from these stories themselves, that poetry, esteemed by the great, was cultivated by the whole nation; that women were more highly respected than in any other country; that the Scalds were held in repute; and, lastly, that baths were as common among the Normans as among the people of Rome and Asia; that abundance and luxury prevailed at their feasts; that they understood the art of decorating their ships and their weapons, without being on that account the less daring and valiant. All these circumstances bespeak an advance in civilisation, which one would

not expect to find among a people of whom the chronicles never speak but as of wild beasts and the pestilence.

But what tells far more than all this, is the state of things that very soon followed the conclusion of the peace in Normandy. Rollo did not sheath his sword — it became the sword of justice. On this point there is a popular story, to which I have already adverted, that of the bracelet in the wood of Roumare, which speaks more plainly than the testimony of contemporary writers. These writers, besides, agree that, immediately after the peace, Rollo and his Normans gave themselves laws, which protected person and property, and that they knew how to maintain them in all their force. The Normans themselves rebuilt the towns which they previously thought it behoved them to destroy; and the husbandman at his plough, the citizen in his workshop, could fearlessly follow their respective occupations.

If, finally, we compare the state of France in the centuries immediately succeeding the Conquest with that of Normandy, the result is still more important; for while chaos reigned supreme in the former, in Normandy, law, justice, civilisation, lifted their heads so high that the Normans very soon became the arbiters of the destiny of France, and had strength left besides to show in Italy, in Greece, and in England, how far they surpassed other nations in polish and valour; till at length they gave, by means of their *trouvères* and of chivalry, a new direction to literature as well as to the military art.



The history of Rouen furnishes a proof that the people very soon began to find themselves gainers by the invasion of the Normans. Scarcely thirty years after the peace of Claire d'Epte (in 943), after Rollo's son, William Longsword, had been murdered by Arnold, duke of Flanders, Louis d'Outremer, king of France, repaired to Rouen, and took under his care Richard, the son of William, who was yet a minor. The people, regarding this proceeding as a stratagem of the king's to secure the person of the young duke, and to keep him prisoner, assembled in the streets, and rose in a mass in behalf of their prince. The insurrection assumed every moment a more threatening aspect. The armed multitude at length prepared to attack the house where the king resided, and to set the duke at liberty by force. The king was obliged to take the boy in his arms, to show him to the concourse of people, and to assure them that it was far from his intention to do any harm to the duke, that he only wished to keep him near himself, that he might give him such an education as would render him worthy to rule the Normans. The great majority of those men had witnessed, as boys, the invasion of the Normans, or had heard at least, when young, the stories told by their fathers concerning them. And it was these who stood up for their Norman duke. The people consisted chiefly of descendants from the Gauls and Franks, and they threatened the descendant of the kings who had reigned over their forefathers. The conduct of the Normans, and the innovations intro-



duced by them, must, to judge from this single circumstance, have been of such a nature as to make the people forget their history, their descent, and their former sympathies; and this is the strongest evidence that can be adduced in favour of the conquerors.

Louis d'Outremer had merely yielded to the vehemence of the people; he had no notion of missing such an opportunity of re-uniting Normandy with his dominions. He soon forgot his promise, entered Normandy with an army, and partially enforced a momentary submission. A Danish auxiliary force, and the escape of Richard from his captivity, deranged his plans. He was obliged to retire before the new comers. Here we again see the people of Rouen actively bestirring themselves, and taking prisoner the king of France (944) when he entered their city on his retreat; which seems to prove that the first insurrection was more than a mere passing excitement. This is rendered still more evident, when we read in the historical works of the times that, at the entry of Richard into Rouen, the people thronged in such multitudes to meet him, that the clergy, when they had reached the extremity of the suburb, were prevented by the concourse from approaching the duke. The subsequent siege of Rouen by Louis, Otho, emperor of Germany, and Arnold of Flanders, did not last long enough to put the attachment of the people to a decisive test, and merely afforded occasion to the Normans, when the besiegers were withdrawing overnight, to display

their valour ; for they attacked and killed a great number of them at a place called Rougemare, from the blood spilt there on that day, and then pursued them as far as the territory of Amiens.

The effects of the laws and institutions of the Normans always manifested themselves as promoting the interests of the country ; and though many things, especially the increasing demoralisation of the clergy, opposed the development of those effects, yet the state of the country was, in a political respect, invariably ahead of that of all the surrounding provinces. " During the tenth century," says Liquez, " the religious position of Normandy was nearly the same as that of other countries, because it was not without difficulty that the ancient faith succeeded in subduing the new generation ; the political position, on the contrary, was different, because the new generation, possessors through the Conquest, independent by rational instinct, succeeded in quashing the subsisting form of government, and in founding order every where in the place of anarchy."

The operation of the Germanic principle was destined to show itself in a way dangerous to the conquerors, who, like all conquerors, formed an aristocracy. In the towns, the victors and the vanquished became more and more blended by daily intercourse. The citizens participated in their way in the Norman institutions, and both parties soon forgot who was the conqueror and who the conquered. In the country, this fusion took place more slowly. There

the peasantry formed a distinct class, in many respects without law, subject to and dependent on the invader aristocracy. But the influence of that which met the eye of every peasant when he came to the city, the independence of the citizens and their freedom, could not be without effect; and hence it was that the Norman peasants were the first in Europe who claimed the rights of man, while those of all other countries were still the willing serfs of their lords.

A century had not elapsed from the settlement of the northern invaders, before Normandy witnessed the first insurrection of the peasantry. In several counties, the villagers assembled, and resolved to throw off the yoke of their lords, and in future to obey only such laws as they should impose on themselves. Each village chose two deputies, to discuss in a general assembly the proposals of individual villages, and to adopt such resolutions as they should deem right and proper. In this proceeding, the lords discovered manifest high treason; and Raoul, uncle of duke Richard II., was commissioned to chastise the insurgents. He fell upon the assembly, caused several of the deputies to be burned alive, while the others had their hands and feet, their noses and ears, cut off, and their eyes put out, to make them, according to the expression of the historian of that time, "unfit for any thing."

In Germany, similar cruelties, practised after the wars of the peasants, are accounted for on the principle of retaliation for atrocities committed by the



peasants themselves. In Normandy, the nobles have no such excuse ; and, indeed, any where else it would be superfluous, as the lords would most assuredly have acted precisely in the same manner without it. A ravenous beast, which breaks its chain and tears its master in pieces, is caught and chained up again. But a slave, a serf, who merely bursts, or strives to burst, his fetters to become a man — oh ! that is a totally different affair, and demands the interference of the executioner.

Some years afterwards, a similar insurrection took place in Bretagne, which had also been partially conquered by the Normans ; and there, too, a contest ensued between the peasants and the lords, which was decided in favour of the latter. The spirit that called forth these insurrections, however, was not subdued ; and, not long afterwards, we find mention made, in the history of Normandy, of communes of free peasants.

Let people think as they please of revolutions and insurrections of peasants, it must be admitted that they are invariably, more or less, a consequence of the advanced civilisation of the insurgents ; for they are attributable only to the aroused feeling of independence, to the consciousness of rights which men think themselves authorised to claim, and which they have the courage to demand — evidences these of an advance towards intellectual and civil maturity, though the fruit may be precocious.

These insurrections are indirectly of importance for the history of Normandy. In the sources, men-



tion is rarely made of the legislative right of the free Normans ; on the other hand, this insurrection of peasants, in which the serfs claimed that right, attests that it was possessed by the freemen, for we may be pretty sure that the former demanded no more than they saw every day in the possession of others.

It would be wonderful if, in a country where the peasants already began to think and to feel their importance, the other classes too had not endeavoured to open for themselves a more unrestricted career. The insurrection of peasants and principles of reformation were destined to be contemporaneous, and to go hand in hand, as in Germany. And thus we see that, nearly about the same time (since 1000), the Norman clergy sought to prove the dissolubility of marriages from the Bible, that images were destroyed in churches, that the necessity of tithes for salvation was doubted ; that, lastly, the presence of Christ in the host was questioned ; that even bishops broached this question, and so forced Duke Richard II. to threaten them with deposition from their dignity. These things occurred in Normandy five hundred years before Luther ; they prove much more than any reasoning the moral state of the country and the influence of the Germanic principle.

We now arrive at a phenomenon which afforded the most striking evidence of the political energy of the country. The conquest of England by William, the seventh duke of Normandy, scarcely one hundred and fifty years after Rollo landed as a pirate in

France, is not to be accounted for, if even all possible justice is done to the genius of the Conqueror, but by the moral superiority of the Normans over the Anglo-Saxons. If there is any one whom all this does not suffice, let him recollect that, at the moment when Normandy had to complete and to defend this conquest, at a time when a German emperor was obliged to appear barefoot before the pope and beg his absolution, William dared forbid his clergy all correspondence with Rome, curtail their jurisdiction, prohibit excommunication without his previous permission, and at the same time keep the nobility within bounds by the God's peace and the people by the law of *couvre-feu* ; and that, in the enforcement of these measures, adopted with the consent of the states, he could always reckon upon the support of the majority of his subjects, while in other countries the lightnings of the church shattered crowns, and the power of the nobles oppressed the people and undermined thrones.

The conquest of England gave the history of Normandy a different direction. The moral and political state of the country had raised its dukes to a consequence wholly disproportionate to the extent of their dominions. All France was immediately under their supremacy ; and as soon as Hugh Capet had secured the Duke of Normandy, he saw a way opened for him to the throne of France. The ancient propensity of the Normans to emigration and conquest continued to impel them to seek a field for

their activity out of their own country, the moment there was nothing left for them to do at home. Italy, Sicily, and Greece succumbed to separate bands of Norman knights. The moral energy of the country, this fondness for emigration, adventures, and conquests, would certainly sooner or later have made the Norman dukes kings of France, if such another epoch had supervened as that when Richard I. placed the crown on the head of his friend, Hugh Capet. The conquest of England assigned to them a different field.

On the conquest of England, Normandy became a province of that kingdom. Civil dissensions in England, the divided interests of the nobility, at once Norman and English, the foibles, the vices, and the crimes of the Conqueror's successors, who, like the offspring of all other conquerors, bore the curse of the people who had fallen by the sword of their progenitors, the degeneracy of the nobles through the wealth and the spoil which they had acquired in England, lastly, the endless wars of the barons among themselves under William's descendants, broke the strength of Normandy, and gradually estranged the people from the sovereigns of England. The question whether France should become Norman was reversed, and thenceforward the only point was whether Normandy should become French.

The history of Normandy, from the moment of the conquest of England, exhibits an incessant conflict of the nobles with one another and with their



princes, in which the people were invariably the scapegoat, and had to bear the consequences of this state of things, till it terminated at last in the moral ruin of the nobles themselves, and in the conquest of Normandy by France. There are few epochs that excite such profound disgust in the historical inquirer. The sons of William the Conqueror, weak and unenterprising like those of Charlemagne, quarrelled like them about the spoils of their father, and thus afforded, like them too, the fairest opportunity for annihilating themselves. William II., King of England, strove to wrest the duchy of Normandy from his brother Robert Courtehoose. During these dissensions, and more especially through the lawlessness of the nobles, caused and promoted by this state of things, the inhabitants of Rouen saw their rights trampled under foot and their trade destroyed. Still they had no thought of throwing themselves into the arms of a foreigner, and so they merely sought protection of the stronger, the king of England, and with Conan, one of the wealthiest citizens at their head, offered to open the gates of the city to him. They actually admitted a number of the king's troops into the place. But, at the same moment, Robert's barons, to whom the plan of the inhabitants had been betrayed, entered the city by another gate. The streets were transformed into a field of battle. As the princes fought, brother against brother, so did the citizens. Robert, who seems to have had no more heart in his body than brains in his head, fled from the city; but his younger



brother Henry remained, and at length gained with his knights the victory over the citizens, who adhered to the king. The revenge of the duke's partisans was worthy of the times. Henry with his own hand threw Conan out of the window of the ducal palace, so that he was dashed in pieces upon the stones; and Richard gave up the citizens, whose anger he durst not meet, to the mercy of his knights, who carried them off in troops, dreadfully ill used them, and left them to languish and starve in their dungeons if they had not wherewithal to purchase life and liberty. The historian of that time says on this occasion: "Thus we see that proud Normandy, which conceived that she durst do any thing to subjugate, to plunder, and to lay waste England, herself a prey to all sorts of calamities. She has exterminated the rulers of England, and now she tears her own bosom, and makes her own children miserable. She is puffed up with the wealth of England, and now mangles herself for the sake of that wealth; and, like Babylon, she is obliged herself to drink the bitter cup which formerly she forced upon foreign nations."\*

In spite of these contests and cruelties, perhaps precisely in consequence of them, the citizens, especially of the principal towns, contrived to extend their influence more and more. They acquired strength and importance, and we soon find their rights publicly recognised more or less by their rulers. Henry granted, or rather confirmed, the

\* Odoric. Vital. I. viii.

right which had long virtually belonged to the communes of several towns, Pont-Audemer, Eu, and others; and at Rouen we see, on occasion of the marriage of Henry to the empress Matilda, a proof that the great were learning to respect the people, as the citizens were then for the first time publicly summoned and invited by heralds to take part in the solemnity.

In the struggle for the crown of Normandy, which took place after the decease of Henry I., the youngest of the Conqueror's sons, between Henry Plantagenet (Henry II.) and his barons, we find the nobility divided, and the people not siding with either party. Rouen opened its gates, without the slightest resistance, to Geoffry Plantagenet.

The profound immorality of the Plantagenets—Henry II., for example, forced the bride of his own son to gratify his lust—could not but estrange the people more and more from their princes. These dispositions could not be any secret to the kings of France, and thus we see the designs of that power upon Normandy again manifesting themselves. In the quarrel of Henry II. with the English clergy, Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, who was the champion of the principles of Gregory VII. in England, fled to France, where he found a willing protector in Louis VII., who expressed himself in favour of the English clergy, and encouraged the intervention of the clergy of France. This was the way to gain the good-will of the representatives of the church in Normandy, and such was actually the

result. Thenceforward the kings of France neglected no means to win them over more and more to their interests. But an occasion soon offered to act with more effect. Dissensions in the family of Henry II., fostered if not excited by the king of France, led to the flight of Prince Henry, the eldest son of the English monarch, to France, and Louis took up arms in his behalf. But the oft-tried loyalty of the Normans was strong enough to withstand this attack, and, though the French army advanced without resistance to Rouen, it was there repulsed with great loss.

The crusade of Richard Cœur de Lion contributed to alienate the people still more from the prince. During Richard's absence, the archbishop of Rouen was regent of the duchy; and it may easily be conceived that the clergy did not neglect so fair an opportunity of extending their prerogatives at the expence of the people. In Rouen itself, these encroachments drove the people to riot, as the priests had turned the churches and their precincts into markets, where they allowed foreign traders to expose their goods for sale, upon paying a certain per-centage—a proceeding which tended to injure the trade of the citizens. The people of Rouen pulled down the walls enclosing the churches, and drove out the dealers patronised by the clergy. But, if the citizens proved the stronger of the two on this occasion, the clergy gave way but for the moment, and awaited other opportunities for enforcing their pretensions.



Normandy had successively felt the pressure of the different estates of the duchy, of the princes, of the nobles, and of the clergy ; and though at times the kings did not act in the interest of the other two estates, still the citizens had less to hope from them, as they were obliged to divide their activity between two countries, and were in general called away from Normandy when their presence was most wanted there. The ranks of the nobles were already thinned by the crusades : the clergy were drawn by the kings of France into their interest, and could not, at any rate, be losers, by exchanging sovereigns, who in some particulars defied the yoke of Rome, for the pious and most christian kings of France.

Thus every thing was prepared for that event which, ever since the conquest of England by William, had been written in the book of Fate ; and Philip Augustus, king of France, was the man destined to fulfil this decree. John, surnamed Lackland, who had but courage enough to be the assassin of a boy, his nephew Arthur, merely accelerated what was before inevitable : for the brave and chivalrous Cœur de Lion himself had not been able to quash the pretensions of Philip Augustus. About three hundred years after the invasion of Neustria by Rollo, and one hundred and fifty after the conquest of England, Normandy again became French, after the reduction of Chateau Gaillard, almost without a struggle. Rouen, Arquets, and Verneuil alone attempted to form a league and to oppose France. But they were too weak to oppose



Fate, and surrendered likewise almost without drawing a sword, when Philip Augustus manifested his willingness to respect and to confirm their rights.

The privileges of the city of Rouen were confirmed three years afterwards, in 1207, at Passy sur Eure, and we see from them what a development commerce and the commune in particular had already attained. In regard to the latter, the people obtained no more than had been granted to them under the dukes of Normandy and the kings of England, as it appears from the articles, in which it is said: "We have given and confirmed to our faithful subjects and citizens of Rouen all their usages and liberties.....We have recognized the right of commune, citizenship, banlieu, and administration of justice, within the limits which king Richard assigned to them, but without prejudice to the rights of the lords who possess landed property in the district of the city."

These rights consisted in the administration of civil justice, and in the cognizance of crimes and misdemeanours up to a certain degree, the exceptions being thus designated, "*pourvu qu'il n'y ait point des morts ou mutilations ou que la cause ne depende pas du Plet de l'épée.*" The Plet de l'épée was the superior criminal jurisdiction. "The mayor shall have the assignations of the people of his jurisdiction, and see them righted, and none shall dare to lay hands upon them, excepting him and his sergeant, unless they have become amenable to the Plet de l'épée; and to this end the mayor is bound

to assist our *bailly*, that he may be able to administer justice in his *baillage*, or jurisdiction." Thus the citizens could not be apprehended but by their own mayor, and it was only through him that the king's *bailly* could execute his decrees.

This act moreover secures to the citizens the right of marrying according to their free choice, relieves them from the duty of paying *fouage*, of guarding the king's prisoners, of paying the *taille ordinaire*, "si non qu'ils l'accordent de bonne volonté," whereby the right of refusing taxes was granted to them. On wine alone they paid a certain duty; on the other hand, the king engaged to pay for the wine which he himself or his people should take, and at the same price at which it was sold to others. According to the same act, the citizens had the right of pasture for their cattle in all the domain forests in Normandy. All goods belonging to the people of Rouen passed free from the king's customs, and they were likewise toll-free upon the Seine. Rouen had moreover a right of staple for all merchandize going up and down the Seine. No ship could go from France to Ireland—excepting one every year from Cherbourg—or come from Ireland to France, without unloading at Rouen; and lastly, strangers could not sell or buy goods in Rouen, but through the medium of a citizen.

The history of Normandy, as an independent state, closes with the conquest of the duchy by Philip Augustus, and with that charter in which he

recognized the privileges of the citizens of Rouen. This act is therefore of great importance, as it clearly proves on what step of freedom and independence the burghers of cities stood at that early period, and marks the moment when Normandy ceased to exist as such. For, thenceforward, though the Norman institutions continued to vegetate for a considerable time, and the English again held temporary sway in Rouen, Normandy was nothing more than a province of France, and it is only as such that its history is of any interest. In my further remarks I shall therefore confine myself to the notice of such points only as serve more or less to illustrate the character of the people.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

History of Normandy continued—Invasion of France by Edward III.—Atrocious Treachery of John king of France—Respect paid to popular Opinion by the king of Navarre—Dawning Importance of the Tiers-Etat—King of Rouen—State of France on the Invasion of Henry V.—Spirit of the People of Rouen—Siege and Surrender of the City to the English—Execution of Joan of Arc—Jacques Cœur—Dissensions between the Catholics and the Protestants—Massacre of St. Bartholomew—Conflicts of the League—Effects of the Government of Henry IV.—Assembly of the States General under Louis XIII.—Richelieu—Spirited Conduct of the Parliament of Normandy under Louis XV.—Louis XVI.—The Revolution.

PHILIP LE BEL, son of Philip Augustus, seized the possessions of the count of Artois, who fled to England. D'Harcourt, a Norman knight, accompanied him, and the latter soon contrived to persuade king Edward III. that the best thing he could do would be to invade France, in order to recover Normandy. But the Normans were so entirely reconciled to the authority of France, that (in 1340) they offered their then duke John, son of the king of France, 4000 horse and 20,000 foot-soldiers to oppose the English.

The heroic exploits of the English, and the chi-



valrous spirit of king Edward and his son, the Black Prince, are well known. It is an interesting fact that, at the battle of Crecy (1346), the cannon of the English produced the same effect upon the French as did those of the first conquerors of America on the savages.

During the first half of this contest, Normandy was spared, but a murder was destined to kindle afresh the flames of this war, which had originated in a robbery, and they afterwards extended to Normandy, which had witnessed that murder.

John I., after he ascended the throne, granted the dukedom of Normandy to his son Charles. This prince invited the grandees of the duchy to an entertainment, which he gave on his arrival at Rouen. Among them were Charles king of Navarre, John and William d'Harcourt, and several other nobles, who were reputed to belong to the English party. Just at the moment when the attendants were setting the dishes on the table for the entertainment, king John himself arrived in Rouen, ordered those persons to be seized, sat down coolly to the repast provided for them, and then ordered four of them, among whom was John, the son of Geoffry d'Harcourt, who had induced king Edward to invade France, and commanded a division of his army, to be beheaded. From the window of the dining-room the king watched the executioners performing their office.

This atrocity excited the strongest abhorrence throughout Normandy ; and the people everywhere

rose as soon as it became known. Geoffrey d'Har-court hastened back to England, and his paternal feelings inspired him with sufficient eloquence to draw a fearful retaliation on the king, and unfortunately on the people too, of France. A fresh army of English landed, and in the battle of Poitiers (September 19th, 1356), 8000 of them defeated 60,000 French, and took king John himself prisoner.

The hatred subsisting between Charles le Mauvais, king of Navarre, and the king of France, prevented the latter from opposing the English with a requisite force, and affords us occasion to remark a circumstance, which was till then without parallel in modern history, and showed that a total change of things was nearer at hand than any one, and least of all the principal persons of the drama, suspected. Charles, king of Navarre, was the enemy of the king of France. A century earlier, a battle or a single combat would have decided the quarrel, and the royal adversaries would at most have issued a summons to their brave knights, while the people would only have had to bear the expence, and to endure the ill usage of the armies on their passage. But those times were past. Charles le Mauvais, king of Navarre, as I have said, had a stage erected in Paris, from which to harangue the populace, and forced the dauphin Charles, (afterwards Charles V.) to descend from the steps of the throne, and to address the people in the market-place.

Any comment would be superfluous; the fact

speaks plainly enough for itself, and shows that the time was come when even sovereigns felt, or began to have an inkling, that some use might be made of the people, that there was another estate worth thinking of besides the nobles and the clergy. If it is not till long afterwards that we see the *tiers-état* attaining political influence, if it is not till five centuries later that it feels its full strength and makes its enemies feel it too, this is but the same kind of phenomenon that we find on every page of history, which shows the matured but unacknowledged energies of a new age, slumbering as if spell-bound for centuries, till a man arises who knows the formula that breaks the spell, and says to the young giant: "Rouse thee, and go thy way!"

Normandy witnessed the struggle between the two royal parties, till the valiant Duguesclin, to whose army the people of Rouen alone lent 10,000 men, forced the king of Navarre to be quiet. But he could only wrest the sword from his hand, not extract the poison which coursed in the veins of Charles V. of France, and which the king of Navarre had administered to him.

The minority of Charles VI. was a new misfortune for France, for it subjected the country to the authority of plunderers, intent only on enriching themselves, regardless of the welfare of the people, or the emancipation of the kingdom from a foreign yoke. The *intrigues* of the great—*battles* between them had become far less frequent—had meanwhile free scope. We here meet with another phenome-



non, which proves even still more strongly than the speeches of Charles le Mauvais to the people that a new era was preparing. In most of the principal cities, with Paris at their head, the citizens rose against the new imposts of the government, and in Rouen we even find them electing a king from their midst. But this citizen-king no doubt felt that he was unequal to the weight of a crown, and therefore seized the first opportunity to flee from his kingdom. Thus this event was perpetuated only as a sign of the times in the annals of Normandy.

Confusion worse confounded reigned throughout all France, when Charles VI. became a lunatic; and troops of Armagnes and Bourgognes, as the partisans of the duke of Orleans and the duke of Burgundy called themselves, roved through and laid waste the country. At this moment, the English landed in Normandy under Henry V., and defeated the French in the memorable battle of Agincourt (October 24th, 1415). The king of France and his son repaired to Rouen, to take measures there for the defence of the country. But the French troops themselves, which, according to the custom of that time, when the nobles were no longer sufficient, and the sons of the people served as hired soldiers, dispersed after the battle of Agincourt, plundering friend and foe, and drove the citizens of Rouen into insurrection, so that the king was obliged to adopt more energetic measures in regard to these soldiers of his own and of his adherents.



In the history of France there has scarcely been a moment in which the country was in a more deplorable state. Its utter ruin appeared inevitable. A king without either moral or material power; a nobility, showing no signs of life but in intrigues and by hired soldiers; an army which served only while it was paid, and served any one who would pay it; lastly, a people which had not yet arrived at the consciousness of its own strength, and merely stretched its mighty limbs from time to time, in the obscure feeling of that strength—such were the foundations on which the State reposed. Intestine war was the consequence of this situation, and a victorious enemy came, as it appeared, to give the finishing stroke, to erase the name of France from the book of history, and to inscribe that of England in its stead. In France itself there was only heard now and then, in the riots of the citizens, a voice complaining of this state of things; but the princes and the great hoped by means of it to regain what they had lost in the course of time. Only one prince of Europe took to heart the condition of France; this was Sigismund, emperor of Germany; but his voice was lost amid the chaos which reigned in the unhappy country.

Meanwhile, the operations of the English could not fail to be successful. On the 30th of July, 1418, after they had reduced the greater part of Normandy, they appeared before Rouen. On this occasion, the citizens gave a splendid proof of their attachment to their new country, but also of their

energy and independent spirit, in regard to both friend and foe. The siege, though the citizens were left almost entirely to their own exertions, lasted six months. During this interval, they sent a deputation to Paris, and the king heard from the lips of men belonging to the people a language which again announced the new era. "Most excellent monarch," said the envoy, "the inhabitants of Rouen, which belongs to you, have charged me to cry the great *Harro* against you, and against the lords of Bourgogne, who have the government of the king, on account of the oppression which they have to endure from the English; and they tell you through me that if, owing to the want of succour from you, they become subjects of England, you will have no worse enemies in the world than they, and if they can, they will annihilate you and your race."\* Only a century earlier, such language would have been impossible and ridiculous, and would at most have drawn down punishment on the bold speaker and his constituents.

The king of France had it not in his power to send any succour whatever to the citizens of Rouen; they were therefore obliged to defend themselves. The Chronicles tell of 30,000 men of Rouen, who are said to have fallen in the defence of the city. Nothing but famine could at length compel them to think of surrender. When reduced to the last extremity, they resolved to set fire to the four corners

\* Gaube, *Hist. du Duché de Norm.* ii. 166.

of the city, and to fight their way through the English, or to die honourably. But they were spared this alternative; for the English offered them so favourable a capitulation, that the majority of the citizens accounted it no disgrace to accept the terms. In this capitulation the English recognised the privileges of the city, and only demanded a contribution of 345,000 gold crowns, and the delivery of three defenders of the city, Robert Livet, vicar-general; Jean Jourdan, captain of the artillery; and Alloie Blanchard, captain of the citizens; and with this condition the people of Rouen complied, in the hope that they should be able to ransom them. The two former did actually ransom themselves; but Blanchard replied, "I have no property, and if I had I would not employ it to prevent an Englishman from dishonouring himself." And the English did dishonour themselves, for their brave adversary was executed.

Rouen continued for thirty years under the dominion of England. Its citizens witnessed the cruel execution of Joan of Arc, and witnessed it with the utmost indignation. Not long afterwards, all Normandy was in revolt; and when the troops of the French approached the city, the inhabitants of Rouen rose too, and fought hand to hand in the streets against the murderers of the Maid of Orleans, delivered the keys of the place to the French, and assisted to besiege Talbot in the castle of Rouen, till he was forced to surrender.

We have had frequent occasion to remark the



progress of the spirit of independence among the citizens. The whole military system had gradually changed. Henceforward the battles of the country were fought by the sons of the people. But in France a single name, that of a Jacques Cœur, serves to designate the new conformation of things. I have no need to insist on the importance of this name. The history of Jacques Cœur is universally known.

When Charles VII. resorted to a radical preventive against the attempts at poisoning which he apprehended, that is to say, starved himself to death, Louis XI. had but to put a finishing hand to the work. With the aid of the people, he annihilated the last relic of the political influence of the noblesse, and thus cleared for his successor, Louis XII., a way along which he could proceed in order to gain the appellation of *Père du Peuple*. A friend of his, cardinal d'Ambois, archbishop of Rouen, was his vicegerent in Normandy, where he proved a benefactor of the people.

The religious dissensions between the Protestants and the Catholics, to which we are approaching, gave a different direction to the course of events. The noblesse conceived that it had found in them the means of recovering its ancient rights; the people the means of extending their's: but both were disappointed by the denouement of the sanguinary drama, for in France it merely led to the victory of the royal power over both. Normandy was the principal theatre of these conflicts, as the



majority of the people very soon embraced the new doctrine. Coligny, throwing himself at the feet of Francis II., strove to obtain liberty of conscience for the Normans; but it required other means to gain this point: accordingly, under Charles IX., the professors of the new faith rose in Normandy, and had soon the ascendancy in most of the towns. The parliament was obliged to retire to Louviers, that it might not be forced to obey the Protestants in Rouen. The city was then besieged, at first in vain, by the duke d'Aumale, and at length reduced by king Charles IX. The scaffold was the argument employed against the new doctrine, both in the capital of Normandy and in the whole country.

It is not consistent with my plan to detail the struggles of the two parties in Normandy; suffice it merely to remark that, in many places in Normandy, at least, the Catholics themselves held back the sword of vengeance, after a Catherine de Medicis had waved the torch of the Furies in the night of St. Bartholomew; that a cardinal Bourbon, archbishop of Rouen, a bishop Hennuyer at Lisieux, a governor Sigagne at Dieppe, paid higher respect to their God than to the command of a bloodthirsty debauchee, whose watchword was "Messe, mort, ou bastille," and of a vindictive queen, who, when the constable de Montmorency was taken prisoner, exclaimed, "Eh bien, il faudra donc prier Dieu en français!" and who was therefore not even impelled by religious zeal to this atrocity. In spite of the efforts of many Catholic ecclesiastics and

civil officers, there fell in the eight *baillages* of Normandy (Rouen, Caen, Alençon, Evreux, Bayeux, Scez, Coutances, Avranches), in the days of terror succeeding the night of St. Bartholomew, according to authentic documents, not fewer than 141,560 victims, by the dagger, or by the sword of justice, which the government had put into the hands of murderers.

But even these atrocious means were not capable of extirpating an idea. A few years sufficed to restore such power to the Protestants, that they were able to force Henry III. to recognise them, to give up to them eight fortified towns in the province, and to grant them seat and vote in each parliament. But after the death of Henry III., they were strong enough to clear the way to the throne for a Protestant prince, in spite of the League, in spite of all the priests and grandees of France, and in spite of the pope and the king of Spain.

The conflicts of the League again furnish occasions enough for remarking the new conformation of things. The League itself recognised the recently-acquired power of the people, for it united with the citizens, declared itself the champion of their rights, insisted on the abolition of the abuses of power, and demanded justice for all. In Paris we even see, after the death of Henry III., the leaders of the citizens consulting whether they should proclaim a republic, and invite all the other great towns of France to form a league of free cities, after the example of the Swiss confederation.

The proclamations of the League, drawn up in the spirit of the citizens, gained it adherents every where. Nearly the whole of Normandy, though containing so many Protestants, declared in its favour. This circumstance accounts for the obstinate resistance which Henry IV. met with in Normandy, and at Rouen in particular.

Henry's desertion of the Protestant for the Catholic faith, but still more his conduct towards the citizens of the towns which he took, led him at length to the throne. He was the last king of France who comprehended that the times had changed, and that the people had acquired an independent power. In 1596 he thus addressed the states assembled at Rouen : " I have not called you together, by any means, as my predecessors did, to make known to you my will. I have assembled you to hear your counsels, to believe in them, and to follow them, in short, to place myself under your guardianship—a wish seldom formed by kings, gray-beards, and conquerors."

Perhaps he knew not himself that, in thus speaking in accordance with the spirit of the time, he had yielded to necessity, that he had spoken as his good genius prompted ; for, when his Gabrielle expressed her surprise at this guardianship, he replied, "*Ventre-saint-gris, je l'entends avec mon épée à côté.*" The words addressed to the parliament have become the property of history and of the French people ; those uttered in the boudoir of his mistress died away upon its walls.



All France, and Normandy in particular, felt the beneficial effects of the government of a king who, at least, did not act contrary to the spirit of his time. His death was the culminating point in the history of the French people, and thenceforward we proceed with giant strides to the French revolution. None of the successors of Henry IV., who, down to Louis XVI., were all boys when they ascended the throne, had any notion how, through what causes, and by whom, the nobles were driven from the political theatre; none of them ever appeared to suspect that the gradual attainment of majority by the people had alone given kings the power to reduce the nobles and the clergy to political ciphers. The nobles had even demeaned themselves so far as to perform the services of courtiers, ready to comply with every wish of the king or of his courtiers. The kings could not find more devoted lacqueys, and therefore relinquished the people and the government to the great, who regarded intrigue as the only way of regaining their former political power.

The *tiers-état* alone had clear views in these gloomy times, and even strove to act the part of protector of the royal power. In the states-general, which Louis XIII. summoned together (October 27th, 1614), it requested the king, in order to check a reprobate doctrine which had been spreading for some time past, and threatening the independence of the sovereign in regard to his temporalities, to permit a fundamental law to be enacted in the assembly of the states-general to this effect—that,



since the king was recognised as sovereign of France, and derived his power from God alone, there was not on earth either an ecclesiastical or a temporal power which had a right to deprive him of his kingdom, or to release or dispense his subjects from the fealty and attachment which they owed him on any ground whatever. But the voice of the representatives of the people had no more effect than a voice in the wilderness; the king understood it not, and those who did understand it, the nobles and the clergy, opposed the adoption of the proposed article, and took care that, during the reign of Louis XIV., the notables only, and not the states-general, should be called together.

The nobility and the clergy, no longer the energetic representatives of a want of the time and of circumstances, but the mere panders to the passions and whims of a boy, a woman, a favourite, soon ruled alone, and obtained without much difficulty the repeal of the edicts which declared the citizens to be relieved from the *taille*, and even found means to deprive the ennobled citizens of their patents.

The intrigues of a duke de Longueville very soon produced disturbances and insurrections in Normandy, without, however, giving a different turn to the course of events.

Lastly, Richelieu was the very incarnation of that spirit of the rulers of France, of the nobility, and of the clergy. With what eyes the people of Normandy regarded this rule is proved by an insurrection in Rouen, when the people forcibly opposed

the execution of the *Edits burseaux* which he issued, and yielded only to adroit intrigue and to the armed force. The minority of Louis XIV., the carnival farce of the League, which was then called La Fronde, only increased the general confusion; till at length war diverted the attention of the people from domestic affairs, and constituted a point of repose, by giving for a time to the popular energy another field, a different sort of activity, in *la gloire*.

Some have attempted to account for the Revolution by the philosophic ideas preached in and after the time of Louis XIV., and by the influence of writers upon France. But this phenomenon was itself only an effect of the awakened spirit of the people, and most certainly not its cause. Nothing but a misconception, or rather an absolute ignorance, of preceding events can lead to such a deduction. The intellectual and physical force, if the latter term may be applied to the energy developed in war, which France displayed under Louis XIV., is to be accounted for only by the awaking of the people from the slumber of a thousand years, which gave it strength, even before it knew what it would be at, to strangle the serpents in its cradle, and when it had arrived at consciousness to shake the world on its axis.

During the reign of a Louis XV., the parasite plant, which had struck root in the dunghill of the middle ages, produced flowers and fruit; and under Louis XVI. it was cut down along with the withered tree up which it had climbed, and which it had entirely drained of its sap. The struggle of the par-

liament under Louis XV. with the courtiers and favourites was only a type of the conflict of the constituent and legislative assemblies in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The *gens de la robe* were the last advocates of the *tiers-état* and the people, and the creatures of the chancellor Maupéou strove to silence them also.

Normandy distinguished itself in this contest. In an *arrêt* of the 15th of April, 1771, the parliament of Rouen declared the favoured servants of the court to be "intrus parjures et violateurs de leurs serments;" and the manifesto of the 18th of November, 1772, addressed to the Normans, after the parliament of Normandy was dissolved, even went so far as to threaten the separation of Normandy from France, if the ancient rights of the country should continue to be trampled under foot as they then were. It appealed to the compact of 1204, by which Normandy was united with France, and by which it was mutually agreed that, if either party neglected to fulfil it, the other was released from the engagement, contending that the province was thereby replaced in its former state, and consequently given back to England, or at liberty to seek another sovereign for itself.

The document in question then proceeds thus: "Besides this contract of incorporation, the Normans have to demand the famous codex, *la charte aux Normands*. This consists of three principal articles. According to the first, the *Coûtumes* of the country and its usages must not be altered upon any pretext or at



any time whatever ; by the second, the duchy shall be left in possession of its ancient court of justice or sovereign Echiquier, which decides in last instance on all suits in the province, so that none of them can be transferred to a judge in any other country ; and by the third, the kings and the dukes of Normandy must not upon any pretext impose taxes of any kind upon the province, unless the three estates of the country admit that there is the most urgent necessity for them."

Such was the compact, under the protection of which Normandy took the kings of France for its dukes. Its submission therefore depends on the fulfilment of the contract, the price of which is fixed by the instrument itself. "All people," it says, "are appointed by Nature avengers of the violated law of nations and protectors of the oppressed." Twenty years later, this principle was solemnly proclaimed throughout all France.

The manifesto *aux Normands* shows how the notions of the people had developed themselves, how they had gradually become aware of what had been for ages germinating in the soil. The authors of this manifesto were members of the parliament of Rouen, nay, even nobles ; but, in order to defend their own rights, they were obliged, like Mirabeau and Lafayette at a later period, to become tribunes of the people, to speak their language, to advocate their cause, to fight their enemies. All the nobles of Normandy, far away from the court, acceded to these principles in a *Lettre au Roi* (November 17th,



1772), but its language was different, for it was assumed in this *lettre* that the king was held in subjection by his favourites, and it therefore prayed that he would emancipate himself.

Louis XVI. strove to repair the mischief done by his predecessors. It is well known how he was again checked in these efforts by the court and the favourites, how they pulled down as fast as he built up, how they got into his way whenever he would have advanced a step, and how at last, misled by them, he leagued himself with the foreign foe for the purpose of annihilating all that the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies had done, and that he had sworn to uphold, and how all this brought him to the scaffold.

For four or five centuries, what was destined to happen had been in preparation. The nearer we approach to the epoch of the Revolution, the more plainly we perceive the signs and tokens of coming events. In all the great epochs of history we see the future preparing in this manner for centuries, till at length the man arises who knows how to solve the riddle, sums up, and decides the whole controversy. For the revolution of 1789 Sieyes was that man, for he said, "What is the *tiers-état*, the bourgeoisie? Nothing.—What ought it to be? Every thing." And the Genius of History said Amen! and it was so.

The Revolution closed the last epoch of the history of France to commence a new one. It erased the names of the provinces, and that of Normandy among the rest.

We stand upon the field which it has furrowed in all directions; we see the crops that are every where springing up on it; and the astonished world strives to ascertain whether the new plant, the young tree, is the fruit-tree of the new epoch, giving sustenance to all or only to a few, or whether it is a poisonous vegetable. Futurity will appreciate the value of the fruit, and the god of History will bless it, distribute it, and give to each his due.

THE END.

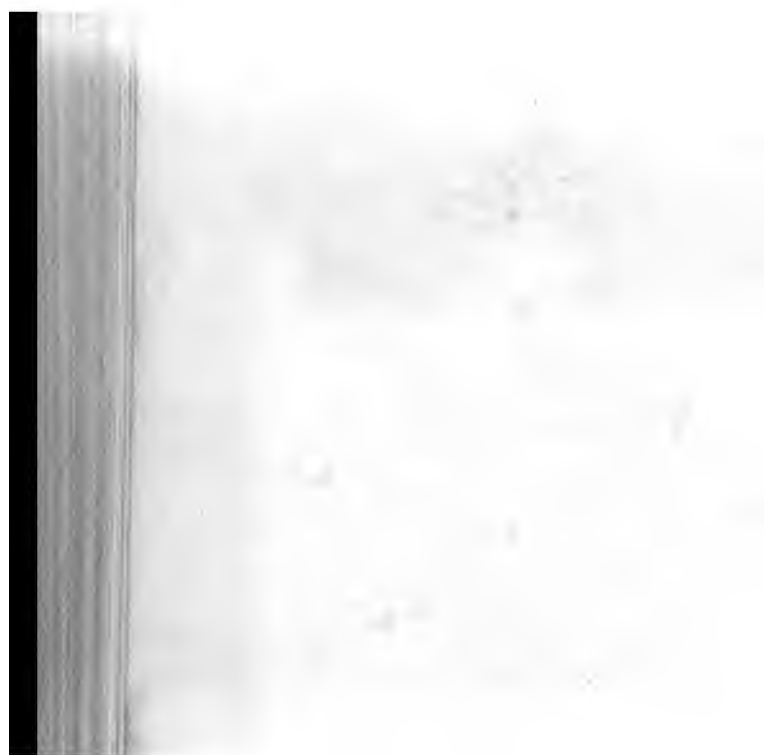
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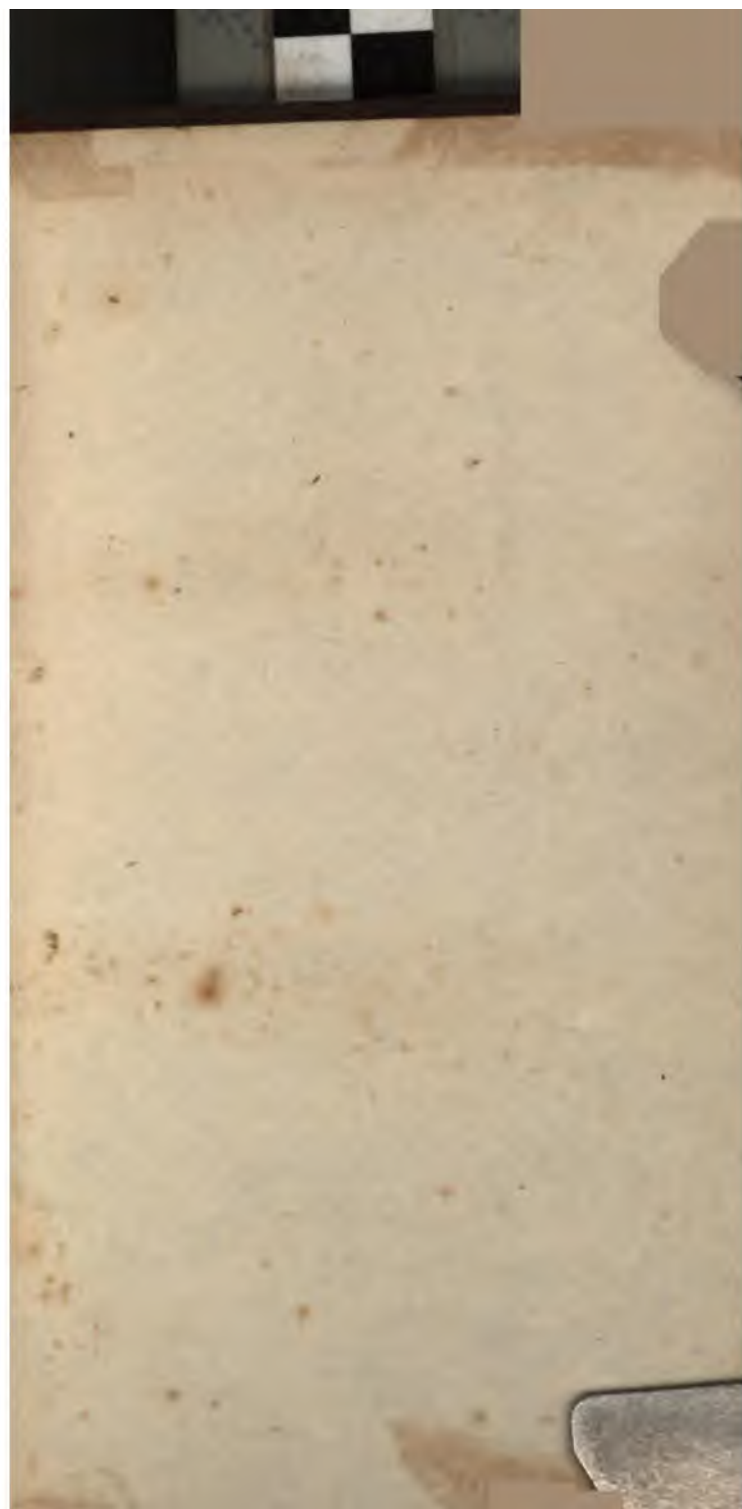














and we may thence infer that so early as the time of the Romans it had lost its former consequence, and that it was then, as it is now, a sort of ruin. Remains, two thousand years old, of a Roman theatre, and Roman baths, and the Roman utensils and coins which have been dug up, afford striking evidence of its early importance.

Near the remains of the Roman theatre lies another ruin, that of the castle of the counts of Harcourt, in which William the Conqueror once resided. Hither came Robert de Grandmenil, abbot of Auch, and previously master of the horse to William, who had been guilty of some offence—I forget what—against his sovereign, and had fled to Rome to avoid his resentment. The pope not only gave the abbot of Auch an apostolic letter, but sent with him two cardinals to effect a reconciliation. When William heard of his arrival, he said, “I will receive the legates of the pope, the general father of all the faithful, if they come to speak to me about the christian religion; but if a monk in my dominions dares utter an unseemly word, I will have him hanged ignominiously on the highest oak in yon forest.” Such was the declaration of the son of Harlotte to the envoys of the pope, at a time when a German emperor was doing penance barefoot at Canossa. William was a resolute prince: to such characters belongs the world, which is sure to obey when any one has the spirit to say, “I will it.”

Popular tradition relates that in this castle

William assembled his barons, when he first made them acquainted with his design of conquering England. The winds have since passed over the castle, and those walls, within which the fate of kingdoms was decided, are now the abode of the wise bird of Minerva, which muses and smiles on the vanity of petty mortals who boast of their achievements.

Around the ancient Roman theatre, around the castle of the mightiest of the mighty, now stand some hundreds of huts, ruins of to-day and yesterday, over which the tempest passes, and whose insignificance is their safeguard. That theatre tells of the popular festivals, of combats of wild beasts, of the blood of gladiators; yon castle speaks of the determined spirit and the pride of the Conqueror, and of the piles of dead upon which he erected his throne; and those huts of the hard, laborious life of the husbandman, born only to seem to exist, to aid the mighty to make history, and then to quit the stage.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Caudebec; beautiful View; the Church—Spring of St. Onuphre—Abbey of Fontenelle or St. Wandrille—La Maillerie—Ruins of the Abbey of Jumièges—Historical Events connected with the Abbey—The Enervés of Jumièges—William Longsword—Agnes Sorel—Superstition of the Inhabitants of the Environs—Digging for hidden Treasure—Legendary Tales—The Green Wolf—Duclair—Ambourville—Gargantua's Chair—Castle of Bardouville; tradition relative to one of its owners—Caumont—La Vacherie—Madame Dubocage and Voltaire—Heartlessness of the latter—Castle of Robert le Diable—Tradition respecting him—Wood of Roumare—Rouen.

THE ruins of Lillebonne had thrown me into a reverie, and in a few minutes, when I again looked around me, we had left them some leagues behind, and were already beyond Villequier—as high as which place old Ocean ascends in his amorous assault—and opposite to Caudebec. Vernet, the marine painter, declared that he considered the view of Caudebec as the finest in all France. It is indeed very beautiful, though there may be finer. The town is seated in a valley formed by the St. Gertrude, a small stream which here discharges itself into the Seine. On either side of this rivulet



rise hills of graceful form, clothed with wood. The Gothic church in the middle of the valley towers above the houses. The latter, at least those which face the Seine, are painted all sorts of colours, white, blue, green, red, and on the quays are alleys of tall trees and flower-gardens with verdant arbours. It would almost seem as if the town, having improved the charms which Nature bestowed upon her, now takes a pride in viewing herself in the mirror of the Seine.

The people of Caudebec, who had made a very gallant resistance against the English, were the chief instigators and actors in an insurrection of the peasants for the expulsion of those invaders after they had reconquered Normandy, and many of them paid with their lives for this temerity. The Reformation found active adherents at Caudebec, which was soon occupied by the Protestants. The revocation of the edict of Nantes destroyed the prosperity of the town, because the greater number and the wealthiest of its inhabitants emigrated to other countries, where they could worship God in their own way.

The church of Caudebec is accounted one of the finest specimens of Gothic-Norman architecture. On this point the partiality of the French for Henry IV. would be sufficient to drive all censorious critics out of the field; for that king is reported to have exclaimed, "C'est ici la plus belle chapelle que j'ai encore vue !" and I must confess that I dare not contradict the opinion. Let him,



zeal for intellectual pursuits, for he had already comprehended that Science may become a handmaid to Power, and that her sword is often keener than even that of a Roland. For a time the schools flourished again at Fontenelle, and succeeding ages were indebted to the monks of this convent for the first collection of the Capitularies, which furnish a key to the plans of Charlemagne.

But under his successors the ancient ignorance, the rule of rude force, again predominated, and thenceforward the history of St. Wandrille is but an incessant series of priestly pretensions, hypocrisy, and depravity, opposed only now and then by well-meant endeavours to restore the original purity of the convent, but in general without success.

The last of the Merovingians, Theodoric, son of Childeric, died here. The curse incurred by his fathers discharged itself upon him. The justice of history often decrees that son and grandson shall make atonement for the sins of the father.

The Muse of history cannot pass even the inanimate stone without inscribing her lessons upon it. Thus those ruins of the church, which once resounded with the blasphemous prayers of an hypocritical piety, through which the winds now blow without resistance, and from which the passing tempest generally rends a few more stones, proclaim that there reigns a justice which is above the calculations of man. And within those monastic walls, where men formerly sported with vows which they called upon God to witness, and where now the

spinning-wheel and the steam-engine are at work, is written the sentence which condemns the idleness that deems itself called to direct the destinies of men here and even hereafter, and gives labour the right to turn it out of its possessions.

Before you reach Jumièges, the twin abbey of Fontenelle, you pass La Maillerie, a château in good preservation. The park and mansion are handsome. They were the property of Madame de Nagny, whom I have mentioned in treating of Orcher, and who was here, as well as there, the benefactress of all around her. She has raised herself a monument in the affections of the poor. Her name will live in the memory of the people, and her history will sooner or later be transformed into a Norman popular tradition.

Jumièges, whose ruins, still proud in their destruction, nod to us in the distance, is, as I have said, the twin brother of St. Wandrille. Its history, in regard to the pursuits and conduct of the clergy, is precisely the same: the names alone differ. St. Ouen, the confidant of Clovis II., was the founder, St. Philibert, the first abbot. The convent was much more resorted to than Fontenelle; for the number of the monks rose in ten years from seventy to not fewer than eight hundred.

At a later period, the same circumstances occurred here as at Fontenelle, and we find the same depravity among the monks, and the same occasional and transient attempts at reform; till at length, in 1330, pope Benedict VII. exhorted them at least not to

trample in public upon the monastic rules and upon the laws of morality and humanity.

Even in accidental events the history of Jumièges bore some resemblance to that of St. Wandrille. As the last scion of the Merovingian line expired here, so there another sovereign house became extinct by the death of its last princes. Charlemagne exiled Tassilo, duke of Bavaria, and his son Theodore, to Jumièges, and both here expiated a sin committed a century too early to lead to an independent throne instead of a convent.

The monks seem not to have been satisfied with this honour ; for they afterwards invented another story, in which they attributed to themselves much the same part that they had played in regard to Tassilo and his son. According to this story, which became a popular tradition, Clovis II. had, besides the three sons known in history, two others, who rebelled against their father, by whose command they were *enervé*, and then sent for life to the abbey of Jumièges. This tale was recorded in the chronicles, and even perpetuated by a monument. The latter gave a great deal of trouble to antiquaries, till the simple remark that the two figures represented upon it are covered with mantles decorated with lilies, overthrew the untenable supposition that they were the sons of Clovis, because it was not till much later that the lily was adopted in France as the royal flower. The people, however, filling up the outline, relate that the two young men, after their nerves had been cut by command of their



father, were put into a boat without a rudder, with one attendant, a jug of water, and a loaf of bread, and turned adrift on the Seine. The current wafted them, in spite of the windings, islands, and bridges, from Paris to Jumièges, off which place the boat stopped of itself; whereupon the abbot received the princes and ordained them. They died at a very old age, after doing severe penance for their sin. The last circumstance, to be sure, was not in accordance with the tombstone, which represents two youths.

Besides Tassilo and his son, and these two imaginary *enervés*, the walls of Jumièges have lodged other princes and kings. The people and their traditions have preserved the remembrance of two of them.

The Normans had destroyed the abbey, and it lay in ruins when the second duke of Normandy ascended the throne. Rollo, on finding his authority established, restored tranquillity, and gave force to the laws. Two monks, who had fled from the swords of the Normans, and grown gray abroad, wished to die in the house where, half a century before, they had taken the vows. They found nothing but ruins and waste land where the abbey once stood, while all around the spot were luxuriant fields. They built an hermitage among the ruins, and became the pastors of the neighbouring country. One day, William Longsword was hunting in the peninsula of Jumièges, and found the two monks in their hermitage. Weary and thirsty, he asked them



for something to eat and drink, and the recluses set before him bread and water. William disdained this fare, and when the hermits told him that they had nothing else to offer, he retired angry and sneering at their poverty. No sooner was he gone than a huge wild boar rushed upon him and threw him down, but without hurting him. That this was a miracle is evident; and William regarded the accident as a punishment for his behaviour to the pious recluses. He went back, begged pardon, and promised them to rebuild the monastery, in memory of his wonderful deliverance from the boar; and he kept his word.

Another prince, whose memory meets the wanderer among the ruins of Jumièges, is Charles VII. of France; but the attention paid to him by the abbey and its historians is only as the satellite of a brighter planet. While the king was driving the English out of Normandy, Agnes Sorel had accompanied him hither, and resided in the neighbouring castle of Mesnil, where she died. Her heart was buried at Jumièges; her memory came to be attached to the walls within which dwelt her lover, who visited her daily; and it is rarely that a Frenchman passes the spot without paying her his tribute of gallantry.

It is well known how Agnes Sorel stimulated the imbecile prince to activity by her love, how she made victory the price of her favour. England was vanquished not by French men, but by French women, and the names of the two victorious heroines are

Agnes Sorel and Jeanne d' Arc. The former contrived to turn an enervated prince into a man, the latter to make an army out of a dispirited multitude ; the one gave to the prince the will to fight, the other imparted to the people the power to conquer. The women of France have a right to be proud of both ; and if there were but these two that became heroines in France, they would be sufficient to justify the gallantry of the men towards the sex. But the French women in general are more energetic, more independent, more self-sufficient, than those of any other nation, with the exception, perhaps, of Polish women. A German woman has a power of suffering, of endurance, such as the French woman does not possess : the latter is revolted as soon as she is no longer capable of enduring what surpasses her strength. Hence the new idea of the French women to claim the rights of men, since the men have begun to disregard the rights of the women, since they shift from their own shoulders, and impose upon them, burdens which they are themselves called to bear.

Agnes Sorel is as bright a phenomenon in her way as *la Pucelle* herself. She continued to be nothing but a woman, and conquered the English with those weapons which Nature had given her in order to conquer. Joan of Arc, on the contrary, borrowed of the man sword and helmet, became man herself, and put to shame all of that sex. Indeed, a woman must envy the former more than the latter ; but men must blush when they think of the

Maid of Orleans. Joan received the crown of martyrdom, and Agnes saw the children whom she had suckled grow up ; the one died on the scaffold, the other in giving life to an infant ; the one is called " la belle des belles," the other, " la Pucelle."

The blunt, deeply moral peasants of Normandy, who could not peep behind the royal curtains ; who knew not that every endearment gained by the king from Agnes Sorel was a fresh spur to exertion against the enemies of the country, recognised in her the mistress only, not the heroine, and pronounced their judgment upon her accordingly. Whenever they saw " la belle des belles " from the other bank, they hailed her in scurrilous epithets, after the fashion of the people of Caen, who shout to each other from one side of the river to the other. *S'engucler* is the term applied to this custom at Caen ; the peasants of Jumièges called it *folerie*, *heulerie*. They were rigid moralists, the old Normans, and so most of them are still at the present day.

All these different recollections give a peculiar charm to a pilgrimage to the ruins of Jumièges, when it is considered that as an architectural work they are grand, that they are situated in a beautiful luxuriant country, that thus Nature, Art, and History unite to elevate us, and to give a higher flight to our ideas.

But the environs of Jumièges present other matter for speculation to the observer. We have seen that the convent, on its first foundation, encouraged



flattering hopes, that it promised to become a seminary of learning and science, diffusing around it enlightenment and happiness. Whoever has any intercourse with the inhabitants of the vicinity must confess that these promises were not realised; for in all Normandy—and the clergy were active every where in the same spirit, and here found besides a people endowed with a lively imagination—there is scarcely a district where such gross ignorance and superstition prevail, and where the people are so stupid, as hereabouts. I am quoting the words of Dechamps, the historian of Jumièges, and at every step you meet with evidences of their truth.

Digging for hidden treasure is a common practice here; and I heard of a village—I forget its name—where not long ago all the inhabitants laboured every night for a whole year with this object before they discovered the futility of their efforts. Due incantations always accompany such undertakings, and the old folks are still thoroughly persuaded that the failure was owing solely to some blunder in the formula, and that the treasures most assuredly exist, for the late Gertrude, who was a very respectable witch, had seen them in spirit and in truth. While digging, they had always several old donkeys in readiness to be laden with the treasure; for it is an undoubted fact that whoever carries a prize of this kind from the spot where it is found will die within the year; and of course it is but reasonable to employ an old four-legged ass to perform that task rather than a two-legged one.



The land belonged to the convent, and consequently so did the treasures too by right, or at least half of them; the danger was, therefore, invented to force the finder to apply for help, and thus make him betray his own secret.

When cattle have the cholic, all that the owner has to do is to go before sunrise, on St. John's day, barefoot and without being seen, and pull up two handfuls of corn-halms in a neighbour's field, to twist these into a sort of rope, which he must wind round the body of the ailing cow or other animal, at the same time repeating the first verses of St. John's gospel:—"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God," &c. The cow cuts a caper, and is as hearty as a fish in water, that is to say, when it is not ill.

When a person is drowned, and his body is not found at once, you need only get a taper consecrated, set it up on a board, light it, and turn board and taper adrift on the water. You may be very sure that the light will float to the spot where the body lies, no matter whether it be up or down the river, and stand still over it.

The whole country abounds of course in tales and miracles. One of the most striking of these is said to have taken place on occasion of the decease of the second abbot, Alcadre. Feeling that his dissolution was at hand, he became uneasy, not about his own death, but on account of the nine hundred monks whom he should leave behind. He was afraid lest the great number of the monks would

exceedingly embarrass his successor, and therefore prayed to the Lord that he might live a little longer. But in the night he had a vision. The angel Gabriel, or Michael, came to him and said that he was right, and that the Lord would provide for the future tranquillity of the convent. And the angel went through the dormitory of the monks, and marked four hundred and sixty of the most pious of them with a palm-branch, and then went back to the abbot and said to him :—" Be easy ; all that I have marked the Lord hath found worthy to appear before him, and they shall stand in his presence in the third night from this." The abbot rose comforted in spirit, and informed them how short a time they had to live. All of them prepared themselves for death ; and in the third night, when they were saying Amen to the midnight prayer, the spirits of the happy band were summoned away.

That an angel, the destroying angel of the plague, was the agent in this affair, is pretty evident. Now the plague is a scourge of God ; the monks might not like the people to believe that the Lord at times scourged the shepherds as well as the flock, and hence the origin of this miracle.

Another of these wonders likewise points very plainly to its source. Not far from the convent of monks was a nunnery founded by St. Philibert. Whether the saint showed common prudence in placing the cells of the nuns so near to those of the monks is a question. At any rate, when the saint, after he had incurred the displeasure of his

holy friend St. Ouen, was thrown into prison and afterwards banished, St. Austreberthe, the holy abbess of Pouilly, was likewise exiled from her convent. Among other Christian duties, the abbess and her nuns had undertaken to wash the garments of the monks. A faithful donkey was accustomed to carry them from the convent to the nunnery. One day, a ravenous wolf fell upon the poor beast, and tore him in pieces without mercy. When the holy abbess heard this, she was very angry, and by her prayers she forced the wolf to perform the same office that his victim had done. She loaded him with the garments of the holy brotherhood, and, till he died of old age, the wolf was as steady and regular in his new duty as ever his modest predecessor had been.

In honour of this miracle a chapel was built. Time and circumstances pulled it down. A cross, "la croix à l'ane," was then erected on the spot, and I know not whether this has been spared by the hand of Time. But a popular custom, originating according to historians in this alleged miracle, and into which something of it at least has been transfused, still subsists, and would be worth notice even though it did not remind us of this story.

There are numerous fraternities within the jurisdiction of the abbey. One of these has chosen St. John Baptist for its patron and bears his name. The new president elected annually is called "le loup vert;" and it would appear that he derives this appellation from the above miracle. On the



23d of June, the eve of the feast of St. John, the new green wolf is installed in his office, and no emperor can boast that his coronation is performed with greater solemnity.

The whole brotherhood assembles for this purpose at the house of the old green wolf, and thence goes in procession to church, preceded by cross and flags, and each member wearing a cap in which is fastened an image of St. John. But the green wolf is covered with a green toga reaching to his heels, and has on his head a high green cap without brim and adorned with ribbons. At the head of the procession a boy in a cope carries two bells, which he rings without intermission, and the tinkling of which is only interrupted from time to time by the firing of the brethren. In this manner they direct their course to the church, singing the hymn of St. John. Near the ruins of the abbey the procession is met by the priest of the place in full paraphernalia, accompanied by his curates, the sexton, and the singing boys. A general salute is fired in honour of this meeting. The party enters the church, where the priest sings vespers. On leaving the church the whole procession repairs in solemn order to the house of the old green wolf, where a repast, which must not consist of any thing but fish and pastry, awaits the brethren. After supper, a large bonfire is lighted before the house of the old wolf; the lads and lasses, all in their best clothes, the latter decorated with ribbons, dance around it, till the brotherhood, drawn up as



before, and preceded by cross, flag, and bells, march in procession about the fire, singing an edifying hymn. When this is finished, all the brethren, with the old green wolf at their head, begin to dance round the fire.

The new green wolf, provided with a willow switch, lays it about the brethren, who, hand in hand, forming a long chain, again headed by the old wolf, run after the new one, whom they must surround and catch three times before he really becomes the green wolf. At the third time, they hoist him on their shoulders, run with him to the fire, and make believe to throw him into it by way of putting his courage to the last test. One of the persons present then strikes up the following song :—

Voici la St. Jean,  
L'heureuse journée  
Que nos amoureux  
Vont à l'assemblée.  
Marchons joli cœur,  
La lune est levée.

Que nos amoureux  
Vont à l'assemblée,  
Le mien y sera,  
J'en suis assurée,  
Marchons joli cœur,  
La lune est élevée.

Le mien y sera,  
J'en suis assurée.  
Il m'a apportée  
Ceinture dorée.  
Marchons joli cœur,  
La lune est levée.

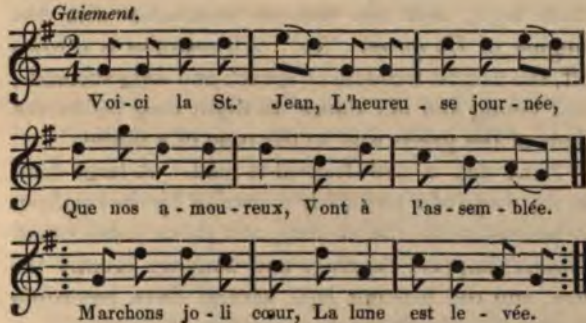
Il m'a apportée  
Ceinture dorée;  
Je voudrais, ma foi,  
Qu'elle fut brulée.  
Marchons, joli cœur,  
La lune est levée.

Je voudrais, ma foi  
Qu'elle fut brulée,  
Et moi dans mon lit  
Avec lui couchée.  
Marchons joli cœur  
La lune est levée.

Et moi dans mon lit  
Avec lui couchée,  
De l'attendre ici  
J'en suis ennuyée.  
Marchons joli cœur  
La lune est levée.

I subjoin the tune of this song:—

*Gaiement.*



Voi-ci la St. Jean, L'heureu - se jour - née,

Que nos a - mou - reux, Vont à l'as - sem - blée.

Marchons jo - li cœur, La lune est le - vée.

This song, which is sung to the accompaniment of a violin, is probably as ancient as the festival itself, and as there is not the remotest allusion in it

to St. John, it would almost appear that this saint is a later addition, and that the festival had formerly a different drift.

After all the ceremonies have been duly performed, the new wolf receives the insignia of his dignity, the two bells, and then marches at the head of the fraternity to his house, where another supper, likewise of *maigre* dishes only, is prepared and served up. Till midnight the strictest etiquette is observed at the supper-table, at which the brethren alone are allowed to sit, separate tables being laid for relatives and friends.

The green wolf is a severe censor of the brethren, and obliges every one who drops an indecent word, or omits to use the designations and expressions prescribed by their rules, to pay a penalty. The moment the clock strikes twelve, all of them take off their caps, and the festival concludes with the singing of *Ut queant*, &c. All restraint is thrown off, the utmost freedom of speech and song succeeds, and young and old dance all night long before the door of the green wolf to the tune of a fiddle.

Next day a new festival is held. A large loaf, in the shape of a pyramid, is carried by the brethren in procession to the church, and there consecrated. Dinner, supper, dancing, and singing, occupy the day, and the feasting lasts several days, according as the green wolf is richer or poorer.

In these ceremonies paganism and christianity are mixed up in nearly equal proportions, and this is no doubt one of those festivals which the first

priests of the latter re-baptized, and which, though they might deprive them of their old names, they could not divest of their ancient usages and peculiarities.

But enough concerning the convent ! The vessel speeds onward. No sooner have we lost sight of the abbey than we pass Mesnil, where "the fairest of the fair" once resided. Before us, on the right bank, is seated Duclair. White chalk rocks, covering the rear of the village, give a peculiar effect to the scene. It is asserted that one of the vertebræ of a giant was formerly found in the environs of Duclair ; what truth there is in this statement let anatomists decide. But that giants dwelt of old in these parts cannot be doubted by him who regards popular tradition as indisputable authority. At any rate, the imagination of the people has given birth to such monsters ; and if faith can remove mountains, how much easier must it be for it to create giants ! Opposite to Duclair, near Ambourville, is a hill, which goes in the surrounding country by no other name than Gargantua's Chair. The name is all that I have had the good fortune to meet with, but I am certain that, if any one born under a somewhat luckier star than myself would take the trouble, he might trace out the tradition concerning this giant's seat.

We soon pass Bardouville, situated at the foot of a hill whose summit is crowned by an ancient castle. Many years ago, so says popular tradition, there dwelt in this castle a knight, whose lady was forced



by her family to give him her hand, though she had bestowed her heart upon another. The latter, resolving to bury his sorrows within the walls of a convent, assumed the cowl in the abbey of St. George, on the other side of the Seine, of which he soon became abbot. He had chosen this house that he might at least be near the object of his passion and breathe the same air with her. Here a German sentimentalist would have sighed away the rest of his life, but that air and that proximity soon set the combustible Frenchman on fire. An accidental interview with the lady served to increase the flame. Thenceforward he swam across the Seine every night, and forgot in the arms of his mistress that he was a monk, and that she was the wife of another; till at length the knight surprised them, slew the abbot, and shut up his wife in the dungeon of his castle. Down to the Revolution, the monks of St. George prayed for the soul of this abbot, who had died without absolution.

Near Caumont, on the left bank of the river, are a number of stone-quarries, a visit to which might be interesting to the geologist. At the foot of the hill is a little villa, called La Vacherie, occupied in Voltaire's time by Madame Dubocage, the singer, whom the poet called the tenth muse. Grimm, however, relates an anecdote which is highly characteristic both of himself, of Voltaire, and of the lady. "I was present at that entertainment," says Grimm, "and I can relate particulars concerning it which the heroine herself was never acquainted

with. Voltaire was cudgelling his brains all day to compose a *quatrain* for her, but to no purpose. The god of verse, foreseeing the use which he intended to make of it, kept aloof from him. Supper-time arrived, but no verses. The bard of Henry IV., in his despair, called for a laurel bough, of which he formed a wreath, and put it on the head of la pauvre colombine, en lui faisant des cornes de l'autre main et tirant sa langue d'une aune, in sight of twenty persons who were at table; while I, who believe religiously in hospitality, and who maintain it to be of divine institution, was sorely grieved to see it violated by the first poet of France towards a good woman, qui prenait toutes ces pantalonades au pied de la lettre."

Had Grimm left posterity nothing but this anecdote, he would have done enough to characterise Voltaire to all eternity. Frivolity could not be carried to a greater length than in this instance.

Voltaire was one of the greatest, one of the mightiest, geniuses that ever existed. He was more than a genius, he was a character. His blows were those of a club, which crushed what it fell upon; his thrusts those of a dagger, which pierced the heart. But Voltaire was heartless to a degree that even a Frenchman rarely is, and the circumstance related by Grimm is well worthy of the singer of La Pucelle. He aimed at destroying christianity, or rather the religion that has sprung up out of the doctrine of Christ, and he did destroy it in France; but he, like so many others, was the bear in the

fable to which I have already adverted. He destroyed in France not only the Christian religion, but all faith and every thing great that is connected with faith. He conquered mind; and interest, the grossest selfishness, have since been the ruling principle of the mass of his countrymen. The heartlessness with which he attacked what was most sacred, and made a strumpet of the Pucelle, and a candidism of feeling, have been transfused into the blood of the higher society in France; and, whenever that which is lofty, and noble, and sublime is spoken of in such society, it is, with very rare exceptions, with a lying pretension to feeling, which pains are scarcely taken to cloak. It is only from that portion of society to which these doctrines have not penetrated that any hope of a better futurity can be entertained.

Behind La Bouille is the castle of Robert le Diable. Few popular stories have made the tour of the world like his, and of late years Mayerbeer has thought it worth while to rake it up again out of the dust of ancient romances, dramas, and chronicles, and to send it forth afresh upon its travels.

The story is remarkable in a literary point of view, for it furnished occasion for the poets of various epochs, and of almost all civilized countries, to exercise their skill upon it. France, England, Italy, and Spain have their romances on the adventures of a knight whom history has overlooked.

In a manuscript of the middle of the 14th century, entitled "Miracles de la Notre Dame," be-



longing to the Bibliothèque du Roi at Paris, there is among other things a drama on the miracle of the Virgin Mary by which Robert le Diable was converted. This drama, which was published by Frère of Rouen in 1836, shows in its plan and conduct that considerable progress had been made in the 14th century towards the restoration of poetry, that poets had acquired a certain boldness in handling their materials, and that they had already begun to discriminate characters more distinctly. If there was subsequently an epoch in which, though the language was more polished, nothing was produced at all equal to the Miracles and the like, the cause will be found in the arrogance of an unbridled aristocracy, in the depravity and pretensions of the clergy, and in the struggles to which these gave rise—in short, in the calamities of a period of transition, which is always poor in the creations of poetry and art. It was not till both these bodies were confined within their limits, not till a new era began to form itself, that people could think again of those pursuits.

Besides this dramatised story, there is another romance concerning Robert le Diable, likewise of the 14th century, and in verse, with the title of "*Le Dit de Robert le Diable*." There is a third document on the same subject in the "*Histoire de Normandie, contenant les faits et gestes des Ducs et princes du dit pays, depuis Aubert premier duc et gouverneur d'celuy*." Rouen, 1558.

The stories of Robert le Diable have obtained currency among the people of Normandy, or rather



originated in their traditions. The people had been obliged to endure the cruelties and caprices of a Robert, they had felt the keenness of his sword, and they called him the Devil. These traditions still live among the people of Normandy ; but the people is a more severe, a more just judge than all the poets by whom they have been sung. It knew only his misdeeds, and pronounces sentence upon him, and says : Let him be damned, damned to all eternity ! And who can doubt that he is, when the aged people in the environs of the castle tell of a gray wolf that no marksman can hit, that neither snare nor pitfall can catch, and that appears at times among the ruins, with the howling voice of a wolf, but in human language, bemoaning his sins, while indescribable horror seizes all who are near enough to hear the appalling tones. Others relate that Robert sometimes visits his castle in a shroud, and that he is greeted in the vaults with the lamentations and complaints of his victims, that the graves of his mistresses open, and their dead bodies show their bleeding wounds to the murderer. Individual herdsmen insist that they have seen him in the valley at the churchyard, imploring mercy of the corpses of his victims, who always drive him away with fresh maledictions.

So far tradition—now for history. Historians have seriously disputed to which of the different Roberts of Normandy the surname of the Devil belongs. The appellation is generally attributed to the father of the Conqueror, though he is most com-

monly called *le magnifique*, and was, we are told, *benin et doux* towards his friends.\* Others, and in particular the editor of the above mentioned miracle-play, claim the title of the *Devil* for the son of the Conqueror. No doubt that among the dukes there were more than one who deserved the title; but the Robert of the popular tradition was in all probability a knight, whose name History has erased from her book as a punishment for his misdeeds, and who continues to live in poetry alone, in order to serve for ages as a lesson and a warning.

On the right bank of the river is situated the wood of Roumare, the scene of the popular story of the bracelet, which was left hanging upon a tree untouched for several years, because the prince to whom it belonged had taught his subjects to respect the right of property. Whether this anecdote is true or not is of no consequence; for the people by whom such stories are invented make them merely to characterise their heroes. This story of the bracelet furnishes undeniable evidence that the people had, at one time, convinced themselves by facts that the Normans punished the simplest theft, and that they knew how to enforce right and justice; and as such it proves more than all the declamations concerning the barbarity of the northern invaders.

The view of Rouen gradually opens upon us; it is beautiful enough to exercise the skill of the painter, too beautiful for me to attempt to describe

\* "Hist. generale de Norm. Rouen," 1631.

it. Every moment brings us nearer to the venerable temples of the city, and such is the force of their attractions that the speed of the steamer cannot keep pace with our impatience. At length she reaches the quay, and a host of importunate *garçons* belonging to the hotels rouse us from our reveries, and we find ourselves surrounded by the prosaic bustle of a French provincial town.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Resemblance of Rouen and its Environs to German Scenery — General Aspect of the City — Architectural Decorations — Character of the Houses of the Middle Ages — The Cathedral — The Church of St. Ouen — Women of Rouen — Place de la Pucelle — Monument for Joan of Arc — Reflections on her Character and Fate — Trade of Rouen — Commercial Rivalry between that City and Havre — Society for the Towage of Sailing Vessels — Projected Railroad from Paris to Rouen and Havre.

A SINGULAR impression was produced by my first ramble in the streets of Rouen. When the valley of the Seine, illumined by the most brilliant morning sun, opened upon us, after passing a wakeful night in the diligence, at the distance of a league from the city, a voice within me whispered, "The Rhine! the Rhine!" Not that the Seine comes up by any means to the Rhine, but individual parts of the former involuntarily remind the traveller of the German river; and, a league or two above Rouen, where the road from Paris descends from the elevated plains into the valley of the Seine, there is such a spot. The rocks on one side lift their heads aloft into the clouds, while a rich



vale, covered with luxuriant crops and studded with timber, appears on the other. The nearer you approach the city, the stronger the impression of the resemblance to Germany becomes; and when you have entered it, when the diligence is threading its way through the narrow streets, the numerous churches, with their Gothic towers, and the old Frankish houses, would almost persuade you that you are still on the other side of the Rhine.

After I had seen my luggage carried to my hotel and got the dust brushed off my coat, I sallied forth, without rudder or compass, to stroll at random through the streets. In Rouen, such a walk is most interesting. I need not repeat how strongly these streets, these churches, these houses, remind one of Germany. In regard to architecture and to the manners of the people, which are mirrored more or less clearly in these houses, those of Rouen are a real school, a collection of all the styles of the last four centuries, a sort of history of the art, the more interesting because other much more living and more instructive histories are connected with it.

Not being myself an architect, I shall leave to others the task of classifying these houses by centuries, and of pointing out in them the progress or retrocession of the art. Particular houses, to say nothing of the churches, are real chefs d'œuvre, specimens of as high excellence as their age was capable of producing. To these belongs especially the Hôtel de Bourg-Meroude, in the Place de la Pucelle. This edifice is of the sixteenth century,

and is embellished by a great number of basso-relievos, which, though much damaged, still excite the admiration of artists. A portion of them, in five compartments, represents the interview between Francis I. and Henry VIII., and, being nearly contemporaneous with the event, is important not only for the art in general, but also for the history, and in particular for the costume, of the time. It is to be regretted that the artist did not work in colours; as he would then have shown the splendour of the courtiers and attendants of the two kings, concerning whom a contemporary writer says: "Plusieurs y portaient sur leurs epaules leurs bois, leurs moulines, et leurs prés." Another series of these basso-relievos, in the compartments of an hexagonal tower, exhibits scenes of pastoral life, in which the bold gallantry of those times is perpetuated; for some of the swains are making extremely free with the lady shepherdesses. In one of these compartments the shepherds are seen bathing, in another they are toying with the shepherdesses, in the third mowers are cutting grass, the fourth represents sheep-shearing, and in the fifth and last, the pastoral gentry are resting themselves and playing *à la main chaude*, the game called in England hot-cockles; one of the fair ones clapping her hands over the eyes of a swain, who holds behind him his open hand, which the others slap, and he has to guess who struck him.

On another house, No. 8 in the Rue St. Romain, at the corner of the Rue de la Croix, are to be seen

a series of basso-relievos, which are likewise of importance for art. They bear the date 1576, and exhibit in seven divisions in the first compartment a school, and in those that follow Eloquence, Logic, Mathematics, Music, Geography, Astronomy. All these basso-relievos are cleverly cut, and each is perfectly characteristic of its subject. Nor are they uninteresting in regard to science, for they are probably the decorations of the house of some dignitary of the ancient high school of Rouen, and thus indicate the branches of learning to which the instructions and studies of the time were confined.

The great number of houses which are adorned with basso-relievos, arabesques, pillars, or other architectural decorations, and which, to judge from their appearance, must have belonged mostly to plain citizens, attest that the people had a taste for art, and thus form a strong contrast with the flat uniformity of the buildings of modern times. It produces a singular impression when one sees beside a house of this kind, gray with age and storms, the spruce finery of a shop of the 19th century. In those ancient houses are reflected the tranquillity and the gravity of the time. If great attention was paid to the exterior, this was not done at the expense of the interior. The windows were small, because when people were at home they wished to be at home. Within prevailed a *chiaro-scuro*, tending to produce a feeling of awe, because it served to ennoble the mysteries of family life, and left scope for the imagination. If the philosopher



who once said that people ought to build glass houses were to rise from the grave, he would no doubt suppose at first sight that his notions had made considerable progress in the last two thousand years. The fact is simply this, that people have become more shameless. For my own part, I never was a friend to glass houses, and I consider it as much more prudent to cover the vices and foibles of men with the mantle of Socrates.

The houses of the middle ages were small churches; the churches of the present day are large shops: that is the difference. Whoever doubts this, let him come to Rouen, examine the small houses of the 15th and 16th century, within and without, seek to apprehend the solemn tranquillity of the *chiaro-scuro* in the rooms, the gravity of the fireside, that high altar upon which stood the household gods of our ancestors; then let him at night travel by post to Paris, that next morning he may attend matins at Notre Dame de Lorette, Rue Lafitte. The thing will then be much clearer to him. The times, their ideas, their notions, their wants, are reflected in all that men do; and therefore every stone that bears any trace of its age attests the character and the pursuits of the men of that age. The temples, and the triumphal arches of the ancients, which oblige the poverty of our genius to imitate ourselves, bear witness to the innate greatness of the Greeks and Romans; and the gothic dome, to the mighty power of faith in our ancestors. And the present time! where is its faith?—where



its works? In July, Humanity roused herself, stretched her stiffened limbs, and the world creaked, as a proof that our time might have its works if it pleased. But next day the puny men shrank in fear from their own doings, and sneaked back into their shops and behind their counters, when a few stragglers of the great days stalked through the streets. We have become weak-nerved, and though we may perhaps be susceptible for a moment of a higher excitement than the hale race of the olden time, yet next day the overstrained nerves give way, and the whole frame becomes doubly relaxed.

Our time knows but one interest—the material—that which may be calculated in pounds, shillings, and pence, that of the shop, and therefore it is obliged to borrow from the Romans their triumphal arches and their columns to do honour to a so-called hero, and to copy their temples, if it will not worship, or rather annoy, the Almighty in a shop, like that chapel in the Rue Lafitte.

That must have been a great time in which the gothic cathedrals were constructed. And yet I have often doubted whether they were the triumphal or the sepulchral monuments of Catholicism, or, like most triumphal arches, both in one: at any rate, when they were built, the palmy epoch of Romish authority was near its end. The whole thinking world already questioned the omnipotence of the successor of St. Peter; and, though it upheld itself for another century, it was only in consequence of the law of gravity, which keeps a crazy building

together, till a single stone falls and the temple becomes a ruin.

The two principal works of Gothic architecture in Rouen, the cathedral and the church of St. Ouen, belong to the most remarkable specimens of that style which exist. The cathedral is in many places overlaid with embellishments, and individual parts occasionally detract from the total impression, and chain the mind down to the form when it would soar to God. The impression produced by the façade is quite magical. I often fancied, when I saw the uncertain light of the moon shining through it, that a marvellous conception of the imagination of the boldest bard stood petrified before me; and those rose windows often appeared to me like gigantic cobwebs, in which the storms of time had here and there broken a thread. I knew not sometimes whether all this—at least where the overcharging destroys the total effect, as in the façade of the cathedral of Rouen—ought to be called beautiful; but never did people express the idea, God, more powerfully, more awfully, more sublimely, either in figures or in buildings, than it presents itself to us in the Gothic cathedrals.

The church of St. Ouen is in a purer and simpler style, smaller and yet grander than the cathedral. It would, even at this day, extort an involuntary shudder from any *esprit fort*. One ought to pray either beneath the canopy of heaven, or in a Gothic cathedral, an image of the universe. But in the churches of these our times it is difficult to think of

any thing but the business of the day, the Exchange, and the shop.

The Exchange—yes, such are the temples of our age; and a temple of this kind has very recently been erected in Rouen. The architecture is tame and unmeaning as the idea from which it sprang; and I should not notice it, if one of the few artists who strive in our days to gain a higher vocation from art had not chiselled for it a few new conceptions in stone. David, the sculptor, has adorned the façade of the Exchange with two groupes, which give a value to the edifice itself. Every body knows that David understands the art of imparting life to stone, and converting it into flesh and bone; but it is not merely with his chisel that he works; his mind takes an active part in his labours. It is precisely in this point that David distinguishes himself from the herd of artists of the present day. The two statues, or rather groupes, represent commerce and navigation. I need scarcely observe that the figures are noble, the grouping ingenious—for they are by David: I shall, therefore, advert only to the ideas which he has expressed in them. Mercury, the god of trade, was till now the god of rogues also. But David said, “He shall be just;” and accordingly he put into his hand the emblem of the goddess of justice—the scales. This is sufficient to characterise the whole work.

There is a particular pleasure in strolling through a strange town, where one knows not a creature. The fancy then has full scope; it can create histories



without fearing that one better informed may break the spell of poetry by the truth of prose. I have often kept my letters of recommendation in my pocket for two or three days, in order to indulge in this gratification ; and I am the more delighted that I followed this propensity to reverie in Rouen ; for I could lounge in the churches, in the streets, in the promenades, without being reminded of everyday life by a single *bon jour* or *bon soir*. On the quays, indeed, my imagination was more circumscribed, for there I saw the beasts of burden doing their duty, and that is extremely prosaic. There reigns during the day the life of labour ; and it is only in the evening that the scene changes. The labourers gradually disappear, and where that class of people upon whom the curse of Adam seems to have pre-eminently fallen was just now most busily employed, issues forth, when the sun has set, and is tinging the whole country with his departing glory, another race, if you please, which, chatting, laughing, joking, takes exercise for an hour to make its rest the sweeter. The quays, the bridges, were covered with the whole of the beau monde of Rouen, and I enjoyed the sight, for many of its members were truly beautiful. I have scarcely ever seen in any French town in the high, the middling, and even the lower class, so many handsome women as in Rouen. I could not help noticing that they have in general light or brown hair, and very few black ; that they have blue eyes, and that even the cut of the face was rather German than Gallic.



The women of Rouen cannot be sufficiently thankful to the barbarians for having made the ancient Gallo-Roman Rothomagus their capital.

I am a real friend to barbarians, and know not that I should make any violent opposition, if an unsophisticated race of them were again to come and attempt to sweep away the civilisation of our time, which gropes about in the dark. In the countries which the Germans overran they imparted new energies to the people, brought them nearer to Nature, and improved and ennobled the race of men ; so that, on examining these, one may mark the places through which they pass, or rather where they stayed long enough to leave behind them evidences of their presence. The idea that the barbarians in the end rather promoted than obstructed civilisation must, to be sure, be a little puzzling to the philosophic historians of the progress. But this is the case only because those gentry believe, in their progression, that it is sufficient to follow their noses in order to reach the goal, or I ought to say perhaps, because they do not see the end of the progress, and therefore care nothing about it.

In the first days after my arrival at Rouen, I made inquiry for the Place where Joan of Arc was executed. I wished to see the spot where the heroine suffered martyrdom, and where, surrounded by the flames, she looked death in the face with the same courage as she had confronted the enemies of her country. The direction given me at my hotel

led me to several Places, through a market, and again into narrow streets thronged with passengers. I must have mistaken the way, and therefore requested an idler standing at the corner of a street to lead me to the Place de la Pucelle. He complied, and I soon reached a small Place, through which I had already passed several times, without knowing that this was the spot where the sacrifice was consummated. A fountain, with the unmeaning figure of a woman, is all that patriotism and art have devised to perpetuate the memory of one of the most glorious characters that grace the history of France. This monument produced, in the first moment, an impression the more disagreeable, because I had expected something better from French gallantry. Besides, I was disturbed by the incessant clack of the market-people and their customers, and so I went home with a heavy heart.

By the way, I was filled with indignation at the manner in which both French and English have treated the Maid of Orleans, and even her memory. It seems as though they felt that this woman had shamed them both, these by conquering them, those by teaching them to conquer, and as though their wounded self-love urged them to revenge themselves on her and her memory. A Frenchman, when he had taken her prisoner, sold her to the English; French and English priests pronounced sentence of death upon her, and declared her a witch because an English commander would have it so; and the knights and warriors of England

kindled the pile, and undertook the office of executioners. But the vanity of the men seemed to be not yet propitiated : and so one, who is now rated high by all, statues and busts of whom are to be found in every cabinet, in every shop, arose and polluted her memory. The house in which she was born has been turned into a cow-house ; the tower where she was confined has been pulled down ; and it has been deemed superfluous to erect a worthy monument for her, either where she lived or where she died. On the bridge leading to the Chamber of the Deputies in Paris formerly stood the heroes of France, who are now in the museum at Versailles. The heroine who surpassed them all was not among them ; indeed, she would have put them all to the blush, not excepting those valets of the great emperor whom he called marshals, and whom we meet with at every step. How would these good people have looked beside this woman, who was of herself a host, who alone proved herself a man while all the men in France ought to have been put into petticoats ! What need we more to account for the neglect of la Pucelle !

If I were an Englishman, I would, if possible, erase her name from my remembrance. Or, I would do penance, and, strewing my head with ashes, perform a pilgrimage to Rouen, and preach up the like pilgrimage in my own country, that the blood which drenched the Place de la Pucelle might be washed out by the tears of my people. For this blood is a stain in the history of England, scarcely to



be paralleled in that of any other nation, and the history of them all is more or less rich in such events. The barbarity of savages, the murders of the Asiatic association of assassins, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the Sicilian vespers, the war of the peasants, and lastly the reign of terror, may be more or less accounted for; but this cowardly judicial murder of an heroic female is wholly unaccountable, inexcusable, a deed the like to which is never met with in the incessantly recurring atrocities of egotism and revenge, of distress and self-sufficiency.

There is but one more dire disgrace, namely, that of a Voltaire. It was not enough for him, in his hatred against priests, that the enemies of France had burned his heroine; he resolved to stain her memory. And so he produced a piece that is not to be equalled for filthy indecency, that attests an imagination filled with all that is vicious and base. The English and the priests had made a witch of the Maid of Orleans; it was reserved for Voltaire to make her a strumpet.

It seems as if that king, on whose head she placed the crown, conscious of his unmanliness, had blushed before her. For while she was tried and executed in Rouen, he remained quiet among his courtiers, and had neither sword nor energetic word to throw into the scale for her. Had the mistress of a courtier, a favourite of the king's, been in danger, they would assuredly have been saved by the threat of reprisals upon the captive English. For the Maid, the daughter of the people, not a hand was raised at



court, and only the populace of Rouen threatened to rise in her behalf, and had to be overawed by a superior force when the sentence was executed.

But the poetry of history required that the heroic career of the Maid should close in this and in no other manner. Her work was finished, her vocation fulfilled. France was saved, and it was necessary that her deliverer should die, that she might appear to posterity pure and unspotted, that she might deserve the goodly appellation of the Maid. It would have been a blunder in the plan of the pure epic if the heroine herself, the daughter of the people, had become at court among courtiers a wife, a countess, a princess, a mother. It behoved her to die, that she might be to all eternity a landmark between an age when the people were nothing and an age when they should become conscious of their strength. For thus it was that, when the chivalry of France was scattered like chaff before the wind which wafted the English across the Channel, a poor shepherdess, a nameless female, appeared and inspired the people with enthusiasm, self-confidence, and love of country, in order to be a sign of the times, a hope for futurity. She was the first heroine of the people in France.

And this the people have not forgotten for a moment. How it was necessary to keep them down by force while she was executed we shall see by and by. After her death the people celebrated her in their traditions. The shepherds, with whom she had formerly tended sheep, related that her coming,

like that of the Messiah, had been foretold by prophets; that for ages a notion had been current that a young maiden from the neighbourhood of Bois Chenu should save France when on the brink of ruin. They related to their children and grandchildren that, when this maiden was tending her sheep, the birds would come to her, pay her homage, and eat out of her hands. They then spoke of her divine vocation, and told how an angel had brought her sword and helmet, and devoted her to the battlefield and to martyrdom. But in Rouen the people asserted that, during her execution, a dove hovered over her, and ascended with her spirit to heaven. The people pronounced her a saint, and called her *la Pucelle*; and this name is her fairest monument—perhaps the only one that is worthy of her. For a Gustavus Adolphus, a stone with his name engraved upon it was thought necessary, for Napoleon a slab of rock with an N.\*; but the heroine could dispense even with the stone; the mere name of “the Maid” is sufficient for her, and is the fairest monument that ever was devised. This idea consoled me, though it does not justify those who deem a stone, a monument, necessary to commemorate their idols.

A few days afterwards, accident led me one night to the Place de la Pucelle. I had been strolling at random through the streets, till, on turning a corner, I found myself before the fountain and the statue of Joan. Solemn stillness reigned around;

\* This was, of course, written before the removal of his remains to Paris.—EDITOR.

the bright stars glistened in the firmament ; and the moon threw her pale spectral rays upon the fountain. Deep awe pervaded my soul, and long did I stand absorbed in thought before the image of the Maid. A celestial smile played upon the inanimate features—such a smile as may have lighted up her face after the bloody day's work that ended in her first victory. Her eye flashed with the fire of heaven, which blasted her enemies, shattered helmets, and overthrew walls. And beside her stood a lofty shade. It was an heroic poet, it was Schiller. Bowing before the Maid, his bosom glowing with affection and enthusiastic devotion, he presented to her a wreath of white roses. And beneath her feet lay crushed the serpents which had hissed at her ; and here I beheld the pursy faces of the priests who condemned her, and between them the sardonic visage of Voltaire.

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While Rouen was the capital of an independent state, it was at the same time the first commercial city of the country. After the conquest of Normandy by the French, the privileges of the city were confirmed : it retained the right of staple for all vessels passing up and down the Seine, and a great number of commercial privileges. The ships of various nations were compelled to land their cargoes at Rouen, and thus it continued to be the most important place of trade in Normandy. The revolution abolished these privileges. The wars



with England, which put an end to all foreign commerce in France, but encouraged home manufactures, caused the effects of this abolition to be at first not much felt. But after the peace, it was soon discovered that Havre had drawn to itself all the branches of foreign traffic, with very rare exceptions. The establishment of steamers on the Seine, and the *chalans*, large barges towed by the steam-vessels, then followed, and gave the finishing blow to the trade of Rouen.

The Seine between Havre and Rouen has some very dangerous places, and perhaps thousands of vessels have perished off Quillebeuf. Add to this, that the ebb and flood, extending to Rouen and still higher, prevented the formation of towing-paths; and thus the sailing vessels bound to Rouen, besides being exposed to the risks which they ran here, had to lie for weeks at Havre or Honfleur, waiting for a favourable wind. All these circumstances could not but tend to the disuse of sailing vessels between the sea and Rouen, as soon as the steamers began to run, and heavy goods could be brought up the Seine in the barges constructed for the purpose. Rouen then necessarily ceased to enjoy the commission trade between Paris, the interior of France, and foreign countries, as the barges can go direct from Havre to Paris.

This change of things was, of course, extremely disagreeable to Rouen and its merchants. Many of them, yielding to circumstances that were not to be altered, settled at Havre, and established houses



there ; but many more, incompetent to take a just view of the state and relations of the two commercial towns, remained at Rouen, and tried all possible means to swim against the stream. At the present day, the mercantile class in Rouen is characterised by its efforts to restore the former state of things by artificial means ; hence necessarily arises a direct opposition to Havre.

The old privileges are dead, but not forgotten ; they still haunt Rouen, puzzling the brains of the merchants, and disturbing their slumbers. Whenever opportunity offers, they strive to recall them to life, but they will scarcely succeed in reviving them for any length of time, and their exertions can only tend to retard the general progress.

In 1831, M. Rondeaux, one of the most eminent merchants of Rouen, who had shortly before declared that, if he were but thirty years old, he would immediately post off to Havre, wrote a pamphlet, to show the expediency of bringing the *cabotage* (the navigation of small craft from one French port to another) back to Rouen. He strove to prove that, in the first place, the disuse of sailing vessels on the Seine had greatly diminished the number of French seamen ; that, in the next, the direct transmission of goods to Rouen instead of Havre is cheaper and more advantageous to the shippers. According to his calculation, this advantage offered by Rouen amounts to many hundreds, nay thousands, of francs, according to the size of the vessels. In the *Journal du Havre*, this

calculation was impugned, and a directly contrary result was deduced. Leaving the task of verifying these calculations to those with whom they originated, I shall merely remark that, were they to turn out ever so favourably for Rouen, which is extremely doubtful, they could not alter the general circumstances detailed above which speak in behalf of Havre; for the difficulties, dangers, and loss of time incurred in the navigation of the Seine are of much greater consequence than a few hundred francs, as, in the time that it takes to go from Havre to Rouen and to return, you might make a trip to Bordeaux and back, or reach Marseilles.

The merchants of Rouen were aware of this, and M. Rondeaux therefore proposed, in order to obviate at least the risks and loss of time of the navigation of the Seine, to make the towing of vessels plying on that river a legal duty; that is to say, to obtain a law enacting that every sailing vessel on the Seine shall be towed by a steamer. The merchants of Rouen made a formal application to the Chamber of Deputies for this law for the benefit of a Société de Remorcade to be established at Rouen; but of course it was rejected, as no civic privileges are now suffered to exist, but only personal ones, and these disguised as much as possible under the mask of the public welfare.

But the spirit once prevailing in Rouen, the remembrance of the ancient privileges of the city, the removal of the foreign trade to Havre, and the opposition raised in Rouen to Havre by this state of

things, continued, and found frequent occasion to manifest themselves. In 1833, M. Elie Lefebure, in concert with several other members of the chamber of commerce, and some of the principal merchants, formed a society for the towage of sailing vessels up to Rouen. This scheme would not have been liable to objection, had not its promoters tried to obtain and actually succeeded in procuring for it a privilege which rendered competition impossible. This privilege consisted in the importation of an English steamer at a duty of 15 per cent., payable in two years, if the vessel should not by that time be exported again. The purchase of the steamer was made merely conditional; nay, the merchants of Havre even asserted that nothing more than an agreement for hire had been entered into with the English owners of the vessel. There were already eight French steamers exclusively employed in towing the *chalans* and the sailing vessels on the Seine, but the above privilege put it out of their power to compete with the Anglo-French steamer. It is well known that all foreign iron pays a very high duty on importation into France, and that French iron is considerably dearer. Steam-engines pay an import duty of 33 per cent., so that the duty on a single engine is from thirty to forty thousand francs, and often more. The Rouen society had contrived to evade this heavy tax, and could therefore offer much more acceptable conditions than any other steam-vessels, which were obliged to bring into account the interest of that capital. The



privilege violated moreover another law, which forbids the introduction of foreign ships, and enjoins their confiscation.

The merchants of Rouen, however, could not derive more than a temporary advantage from this privilege. At the expiration of the two years, the society actually sold the vessel, and things have since reverted to their former state.

The spirit of the mercantile class of Rouen has very recently been expressed on another occasion. A railroad from Paris to Havre would be a great accommodation to foreign trade, now that it has fixed its seat at Havre ; whereas, a railroad running from Paris no farther than Rouen would again make the latter city a compulsory staple. The merchants of Rouen have done every thing in their power to prevent the railroad from being carried beyond their city ; to this end they have induced the most eminent mercantile houses in Paris to take the lead, and loudly insisted besides on the superior political importance of their city. The mercantile class of Havre, in the conviction of the necessity of a railroad from Paris to that town, never dreamt of the exclusion of their place from its benefits ; till Rouen had so far gained the victory, that the plan advantageous to it was approved by the ministry of commerce and brought into the Chamber. Had the question depended on the minister, the point would certainly have been carried in the spirit of the Rouen merchants. But, as it rested with the Chamber to decide, the mere publicity served to



derange the plan of the Rouen merchants, and forced the adoption, at least in principle, of this condition, that the railroad shall be continued to Havre. The question between Rouen and Havre is, nevertheless, by no means settled; for the first plan was with cunning foresight so contrived that the continuation of it to Havre would have to encounter almost insuperable obstacles, rivers and hills, so that, if even the present plan should be accepted upon condition of the continuation of the railroad to Havre, the execution of that continuation will at least be delayed for a long time by the opposing impediments; and in the end it may be found necessary to have a second railroad from Paris to Havre.

The traders of Rouen, if not very rich, yet possess great influence by means of their manufactories, and the political consequence of the city. Their views, moreover, are directed rather towards Paris, those of the Havre mercantile men towards the countries beyond sea. Hence it is that Rouen gains so ready a hearing in the capital. Besides, Rouen, as a commercial city, is actuated by but one motive—opposition to Havre and the recovery of its ancient privileges; so that it can devote all its means, its influence, and its activity, to the accomplishment of this object.

Whenever a commercial question touching upon this separate interest of the Rouen and Havre merchants is discussed in France, it is necessary not to lose sight of this point of view, since it is from this

alone that one can rightly judge of what is going forward. Rouen and Havre are the representatives of hostile interests—the one that of commercial restrictions, the other that of freedom of trade, and its activity is displayed whenever occasion presents itself.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Manufactures of Rouen—Impressions produced by a Manufacturing Town—Factories—Treatment of Children ; its consequences—Immorality of Work-people in Factories—State and Moral Condition of the Weavers—Hardships of the Working Classes—Official Report of the Wants and Income of Persons employed in the Cotton Manufactures—M. Lelong's Memorial on the Distresses of Workmen—Decreased Consumption of Produce with Increasing Poverty—Schools for Children of Working-People ; their Insufficiency—Benefits of Machines ; Enmity of Factory Work-people to them.

So early as the seventh century, Rouen was a manufacturing town ; for St. Ouen makes mention of the cloths woven there in his time. It is now indisputably one of the first manufacturing cities in Europe. In 1823 it possessed no fewer than 95 spinning factories worked by water. In 1827, the rivers and rivulets of the department turned 2954 mills of various kinds. Among these were 1464 corn-mills, 223 oil-mills, 98 paper-mills. The number has since increased.

Rouen has given its name to a species of striped and barred cotton, which is known throughout all France as Rouennerie. The manufacture of cottons in general is one of the principal branches of in-

dustry in the department. Normandy was the first province of France in which cotton was spun. This was in 1700. In 1747 manufacturers of Rouen brought several Greeks to France, in order to introduce by their means the scarlet dye, then called India or Adrianople red; and they soon excelled their masters. The first machines for spinning wool were constructed in England, and their exportation was prohibited upon penalty of death. This, however, did not deter an English company in Rouen from importing the first machines, called little jennies, in 1776. These machines were gradually improved. In 1784 a *brevet* was granted by the government for a machine "d'une filature continue," and several were soon set up. In 1786, Vergennes, the minister, concluded a commercial treaty with England, which permitted the importation of English goods, and thereby gave the French manufactures a severe wound, from which they recovered only by degrees. In 1791, this treaty was annulled; but, for a considerable time afterwards, the manufacturing districts were in a deplorable state. The Revolution infused new life into the people; and so early as the time of the Directory this produced fine fruit; till at length, Napoleon, by closing the Continent, called forth the golden age of the manufactures. The Restoration put an end to it. England demanded, at the expense of the manufactures of France, the reward of her exertions for re-establishing the Bourbon throne; and Talleyrand, the most corrupt of the



corrupt, was not ashamed to proclaim that France was called to be an agricultural state ; whence he inferred, to the advantage of her faithful allies, that England was to supply the agricultural country with her manufactures.

The government of that time soon perceived that by such a system it only made all France still more its enemy, upon which the principle of prohibition was again recognised, or rather retained, as the importation of English goods was never legally permitted, but had only taken place in the train of the allied armies. Thus confidence was gradually restored, and manufactures were once more thriving till 1828. Since that time they have again declined ; and this falling off was attributed to the extensive contraband trade. At length, in 1829, an *enquête commerciale* was ordered, but hopes were the only results to which it led.

The Revolution of July found industry in a state far from satisfactory ; and it is well known that for some time afterwards trade and manufactures were entirely at a stand. In the following year, upwards of 3000 operatives were employed in the *travaux de la charité* at Rouen, and a much greater number were without work and bread. Nothing could equal their distress but the heroic courage and the admirable resignation with which they bore it.

In 1832 better times succeeded, till in 1837 the effects of the crisis were sensibly felt. Upon the whole, however, the cotton manufactures in Rouen have been of late on the decrease. Labour is too

dear there; attempts have in consequence been made to found factories elsewhere, and their success at Marie aux Mines, St. Quentin, and other places, has led to imitation; so that these colonies are already beginning to withdraw her industry from the mother city. Whether this state of things is entirely owing to the high price of labour, the scarcity of work, the proportionably higher tax upon the necessaries of life by means of the *octroi*, or whether, as some maintain, it arises partly from the inferior intelligence of the manufacturers, I leave to others to prove or disprove.

In 1834, there were in the department of the Lower Seine 280 spinning establishments, which employed about 21,000 hands .....		21,000
In the workshops for the construction of the machines, there were employed as carpenters, smiths, turners, founders, &c. ....		5000
Weavers .....		65,000
Dyehouses .....		5000
Manufactures of coloured cloths .....		9000
Manufactures of cards for carding wool ...		2000
Total .....		107,000

If we add to these the different classes of labouring people and the shopkeepers, who live entirely by the cotton manufacture, we shall find that they amount to no fewer than 150,000 families, or 400,000 souls.

In every manufacturing town contradictory feel-

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The government of that time soon perceived that by such a system it only made all France still more industrious, upon which the principle of prohibition was again recognised, or rather retained, as the importation of English goods was never legally permitted, but had now taken place in the train of the other articles. Thus commerce was gradually restored, and manufactures were once more thriving in 1791. Since that time they have again declined, and this falling off was attributed to the excessive protective tariff. At length, in 1829, an attempt was made to be made, but hopes were not realised in which it failed.

The Government of that time, however, in a state of great uncertainty, and it is well known that for some time afterwards trade and manufactures were nearly at a stand. In the following year, upwards of 2000 vessels were employed in the service of a single port of France, and a much greater number were engaged with other ports. Nothing could now be done to increase the foreign commerce and the national resources with which they have to do.

After some more attempts, all in 1837 the tariff was again revised. Upon the whole, however, the value of manufactures in Rouen has not increased. Labour is so

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ings will arise in the mind of a reflecting person. He cannot suppress his astonishment at the industry, the endurance, of the people who here labour without intermission, at the intelligence that has regulated every thing, and that has made out of those thousands and thousands of hands one whole, one machine. Such is the first impression produced by a general survey, which excites only admiration and respect. A closer scrutiny of the details of the works of the great machine shows that these works, these wheels, are men, and a thrill of horror curdles our blood. The immorality of the factory-labourers is an almost necessary result of this state, in which the human machine learns to forget that it is man. Sixteen, twelve, nay, only eight hours of unintellectual, machine-like employment must by degrees extinguish the mind so completely as to leave nothing of the man but the animal part. Idleness is the origin of all vices, and the factory operatives pass their lives in continual mental idleness. The interior works, the mental machinery, of the man, stand still ; the hand alone moves. It is a question whether this evil can be counteracted even by mental activity out of working hours, by schools, for instance ; for these would not destroy its cause and its effects, and the very few who would really attain a higher degree of mental activity would soon be lost for the factories, and quit or perish in them.

The room of a factory in which children are employed presents a heart-breaking sight. The human

mind develops itself only when its activity is excited from without. External appearances lead to questions which it asks itself or others, which it answers itself, or which others answer for it. Without the external appearance, without this incessant inquiry of the child's, this grasping at every step after information, no mental development is possible. But, in a child which, from the age of six, eight, or ten years, goes day after day from home to the factory, and from the factory home again, which, weary in body, feels after working-hours no other want but that of food and rest, it is almost utterly impossible that the mind can develop itself in the slightest degree. It is a corporeal spectre, a body without mind. Indeed, schools are not capable of applying a remedy to this case; for it is not the school but life that develops the mental activity of the child. It would be a trifle to teach such children to read and write; but it would be a gigantic work to cultivate their minds; this, however, is not an affair of learning and teaching, but only of experience, of intuition, of the apprehension of external appearances, concerning which the young mind reasons with itself, and thus elaborates its materials. A boy whose life has consisted only in the alternation of labour in the factory and learning in the school, will, in a hundred times, not rise more than once above the level of the brute. Life is the school of life, and these wretchedly unfortunate children are torn from it, in expiation of Heaven knows what tremendous maledictions, to forget in the factory—nay, worse than

that, never to have a conception—that they are human beings; or perhaps to feel this for a moment, and to become, in the fury of their brutality, rapacious beasts.

But these are only general grounds; there are particular ones of a still more revolting nature. In the spinning-factories, the children are mostly placed under the adult workmen, two or three to each. This fellow, brutal, unfeeling, without a spark of mind, is their absolute lord and master. The slightest carelessness, which is attended with a trifling loss to him, kindles his rage, and is punished with cruel usage. Thus almost every spinner is the unrestricted master of a boy from seven to ten years old, and a girl from ten to thirteen; and very often the latter is not only forced to endure his brutal anger, but likewise to gratify his brutal lust. Lastly, during working hours, these children hear nothing but the disgusting conversation of their demoralised seniors. Such is their education, such their school, such their religious instruction. Oh! what would I not give that it were possible to prove me a liar, a slanderer of my kind!

You need but look at these boys and girls to see the horrible truth written in their faces in characters not to be mistaken. Unmitigated stupidity, malice, and sneaking vice, are impressed upon their features.

Neither does the body attain its due development in this preparatory school. The mayor of Marom took me to see a factory of this kind at that place, a league distant from Rouen. His son, six



years old, accompanied us. Health and childlike gaiety lighted up the features of this boy, and seemed to me to be a sort of scoff at misfortune, an evidence of their deplorable condition. He was both taller and stouter than the spinners at ten or twelve, and most of these were besides afflicted with scrofula, sore eyes, or some bodily deformity.

One boon, a cruel one it is true, but yet a boon, awaits these unfortunate creatures—an early death. Few attain the age of forty; most of them die before they arrive at thirty, and pulmonary consumption is very often the bridge which leads them out of this vale of misery. The work itself is extremely wearing; the hours, for children as well as adults, being from six in the morning till eleven at night, with an interruption of an hour and a half for breakfast and dinner; and in these factories there is in general a dust which settles upon the lungs and destroys them.

The females employed in them betray in every glance the most shameless immorality. I have seen there girls, whom, at their birth, Nature seemed to have destined to be handsome; and some of them still exhibited traces of this her intention. But the moment a smile played upon the beautiful lips, it looked like a blasphemy against that very beauty, and proclaimed the most impudent licentiousness; when the eye was raised, there burned in it fires that told of vice which could not reach a lower point of degradation. How could it be otherwise? The like cause has the like effects in this



case. The association of so many idle females—mentally idle, for indeed their bodies never rest—produces such a familiarity among them, that they have no secrets from one another. Each details her adventures of the preceding night, and thinks only of those of the next. The brutalized mind seeks pleasure after labour, and this pleasure is only that of the brute. Work is not over, summer and winter, till late at night; and when the hour of release strikes, men and women assemble in the court, or before the door, of the factory, and go off together to spend the few sous they may have left. A child scarcely ever knows more than its mother, nay, the mother herself very often does not know the father. One of my acquaintance once saw a spinner ill using his daughter, who turned complainingly to the bystanders. "*Le monstre !*" she exclaimed; "he can treat me in this manner! and since I was thirteen he has forced me to supply the place of a wife!" Enough! indeed too much! If I have exposed the wound, it is in the hope of directing to it the attention of those who have the power to heal it.

Where there happens to be a man among these human machines, he is an exception, almost a greater misfortune than the rule. These exceptions are gradually becoming less rare in France. And the cause of this is the education derived from life and events—certainly not from the school. The revolution of July, the insurrections in Lyons, the combinations of workmen, have shaken society in France to its profoundest recesses. The philan-

thropist cannot think without apprehension of the future destinies of manufacturing districts and towns, for their unnatural state will some day or other produce fearful consequences, unless the whole manufacturing system be totally reformed before it is too late; unless you make men of these machines, which are gradually beginning to attain consciousness, or can supply the place of men by real machines.

What I have said thus far has been chiefly the result of my own observation. At Rouen, a workman himself has raised his voice, and I will introduce him to the reader for a few moments. A weaver, named Noiret, published, in 1836, a small pamphlet entitled, *Memoires d'un Ouvrier rouenois*, from which I shall extract one or two passages.

Noiret seems, at least when he speaks of the weavers, to be a competent judge. He describes their workshops, "They are small and low, and hermetically closed like a coffer, that the dry air may not penetrate into them. They are generally dark, and so situated that the sun can never shine into them. They are likewise extremely damp, and part of them are real cellars; these are commonly preferred by the weavers, who are not aware how pernicious they are." It is a prejudice, he says, to imagine that damp places are fittest for the operations of the weaver, which require such as have a moderate temperature, and are neither too dry nor too damp. It is scarcely necessary to add that the most robust health would be destroyed in the cellars which he describes.

"The diseases to which, from their business, the weavers are most liable are scrofula, weakness in the legs, debility, and pulmonary complaints. The scrofula is produced by the damp places in which they generally work." They are mostly ailing and unhealthy. The above-mentioned causes operate so speedily that the voice of a youth of seventeen or eighteen is hollow and insonorous, so that a weaver may easily be distinguished by it from all other artisans.

Having peeped into their dwellings, let us follow them to their meals. "Part of the weavers live in public-houses," says Noiret, "but the great majority of them with their families. Their small earnings do not allow them to have wholesome, sufficient, and regular food. Breakfast frequently consists of dry bread, to which they often add a quarter of a pound of Neufchatel cheese. As their means forbid cooking for themselves, their wives and children go to the auberges, which are commonly called *gargotes*, to fetch a little wretched soup and boiled meat, or bad *ratatouille*." The French language of higher society has no conception, and I, of course, no translation for this term. The supper is much the same.

Respecting the moral condition of the weavers, Noiret gives the following particulars. "The weavers are industrious, and they are obliged to be so; for, even if they make the best use of their time, they must dispense with much that is necessary. A man is not disposed to take a walk, when



he has had a scanty dinner, and, besides, cannot dress decently. It is true that there is a certain number of working men who cannot refrain from keeping holiday on Monday. This ancient custom has unfortunately struck such deep root among the operatives in the city, that it will not be very easily eradicated. But, if people are not at work, they must be doing something else, and so they go to the pothouses to drown the little sense they have left in spirituous liquors of bad quality. Indeed, I cannot conceive how people who have nothing to eat can find pleasure in drinking."

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that in such a state of things a working man cannot think of cultivating his mental faculties. "As the wages of the workman are insufficient, he is obliged to work from fifteen to eighteen hours a day, and of course he has no time to improve his mind, nay, he never thinks of that, so deeply is he bowed down by his unfortunate situation; and to procure it for him, it would be necessary to abolish—of course, by degrees—privileges, monopolies, and prohibitions, as these crush industry, and increase the price of the raw materials and the necessities of all kinds which the workman stands in need of; or, what would be better still, his wages should be raised beyond his expenditure, so that he might lay by something. Then, relieved from present embarrassment and anxiety for the future, he might hold up his head, know himself, and become a man; then would he see that, in a civilized nation, like our's, natural



talent is not sufficient, and that it must be cultivated if one would not sink to the level of the brute."

I feel no call to express my opinion here upon the means by which the state of the working class may be improved, and merely mean to exhibit the views of a fellow-sufferer. Let others examine whether he is right or wrong, whether he proposes a plaster only, or a radical cure.

Distress, necessity, here rend asunder the ties which Nature has elsewhere declared sacred. The father discards the son, and the son the father. "A detestable custom," says Noiret, "has crept in among the most uncultivated class of the working people in Rouen. When children have reached the age of twelve or thirteen, and often earlier, they make them keep themselves, that is, subsist upon their earnings, and so much the worse for them, if they do not earn sufficient, which is always the case. But the children, in their turn, repay the parents in the same coin; for, when the latter are ill, they send them to the hospital, instead of assisting them to the utmost of their power; and when they are old and incapable of taking care of themselves, the children give them up entirely. Through this custom, the members of a family are like so many strangers; and the children, left to themselves, have bad morals, which are transmitted from one generation to another."

This is horrible! Poverty, armed with the keen sword of hunger, stands at the door of the paternal dwelling, and prevents the children from crossing

the threshold to seek the protection of the mother who gave them life ; and the same terrific figure stands at the door of the child, to drive back the distressed mother, when she comes to ask her own blood for shelter and protection, and a crust of bread to appease her hunger !

A life of suffering, of incessant toil, terminates in a beggar's death. "The workman," says Noiret, "when he is fifty, ceases to be sought after ; he may indeed find employment here and there, where articles are made which are adapted to his strength, but for which a very low price is paid. He continues to work so long as his sight and strength enable him, and so long as he can earn sufficient to supply his most urgent wants. When he is obliged to give up work entirely, his last resource is a custom which has existed in the trade from time immemorial, namely, to call upon those who follow the same business, and to obtain from them some trifling contribution. The more acquaintances he has, the more he picks up ; but he never has enough of them to collect fifteen sous a day, and then the necessity of running all over the city occasions a fatigue that is too much for his strength. A few are admitted into the *hospice*, but not before they are seventy, and then they are frequently obliged to wait several years till there is a vacancy. To them this *hospice* is a prison, which they are allowed to leave but once a month, and they are besides subject to degrading regulations. Hence, though at that age a man's spirit is broken, there are those who

choose rather to suffer privations and to retain their liberty."

Noiret then indulges in the following reflections: "In France, the aged and the poor who are unable to work have no other resource but public charity. It is not enough that they have vegetated for a whole life, incessantly tormented by anxiety about the coming day; they must, even when no longer capable of work, crawl from door to door to ask for that which is not due to them, and to die of hunger, and that too in a country which dares call itself civilised! If such be the consequences of civilisation, infinitely preferable is the state of savages, for among them, at least, man has no duties to perform towards whomsoever it may be; he is perfectly free, and can indulge all his wishes. I know that efforts are making in individual places to extirpate beggary, but this is not done universally; and, so long as no provision is made in France for the support of the real pauper, I adhere to my position.

"According to the public prejudice, the relief afforded to the indigent is considered as charity, and the government itself shares this prejudice. I would ask whether you conceive that you are bestowing charity in granting a pension to the soldier who has earned it by thirty years' service. Assuredly not, you will say, because he has served the country. Now it seems to me that a man serves his country when he is useful to it, no matter in what way. And, in my opinion, an artisan who has worked for fifty years together has been quite as ser-



viceable to it as a soldier who has been for thirty years under its colours. For if arms are necessary for the defence of a country, they are just as necessary to feed it and to provide for its wants. And if the working man has given his youth and his toil for the community, it is bound, on the other hand, to supply him with bread when he is unable to earn it, and has nothing left to procure it with.

“In regard to the ailing and infirm, who could either never work at all or but little, society owes them also a subsistence: for *in society not a creature ought to suffer hunger.*”

And who will venture, with those pallid figures before his eyes, those children thrust by their mothers from their homes, those fathers to whom their sons refuse a morsel to keep them from starving—who will venture to contradict the blunt champion of silent misery?

One might imagine that the working man, who thus complains of his own condition and that of his fellow-sufferers, had laid on too harsh colours: I shall therefore quote another source, which is not liable to suspicion.

In the archives of the Mairie of Rouen is deposited a “Report presented on the 15th of January, 1829, to the Sub-Commissioners of Inquiry, on the questions addressed to the manufacturers of Cotton Stuffs by the delegates of that branch of manufacturing industry, Messrs. Talon, Gambu-Delaure, Jacquet, and Lelong.” It contains, by way of appendix, a “Statement of the annual wants of a



working man of Rouen, compared with the resources which he can procure by his labour during the same period." This statement is as follows:—

“ WANTS.

2½ lb. bread, per day.....	45 cent.
Cheese or Herring for breakfast	10
A portion from the <i>gargottier</i> for dinner.....	20
Drink.....	20
	—
	95 cent. per day.
	—

Per Year.....	346 fr. 75 cent.
Clothes.....	60
Washing .....	15
Casual Illness .....	10
Lodging .....	50
Candle .....	6
Fire, one <i>foyaie</i> at 50 cent. per day .....	26
	—

For one workman, per year..... 513 fr. 75 cent.

If the workman has two children from seven to ten years old, who earn but little, and often even prevent the mother from working, the personal expence of the father is increased by at least one-third of the total ex-

pence, with the exception of  
candle, fire, and lodging..... 107 95

Total ..... 621 fr. 70 cent.

If the children are under seven  
years old, so that they earn  
nothing and take up all the  
time of the mother, there is a  
further increase of expences by  
at least as much more ..... 107 95

Total ..... 729 fr. 65 cent."

#### " INCOME.

" The usual wages, 1 franc, 75 cent., amount in a year to 525 francs, so that the workman who has only himself to provide for may have a yearly surplus of 11 francs. If he has two children, from seven to ten years old, in the circumstances assumed in the above statement, there is a deficit of 96 fr. 75 cent. If he has two children, under seven years old, this deficit is increased to 204 fr. 75 cent.

" All these unavoidable expences are those of a workman who has no implements or materials to find. When he has to find a variety of petty articles, as is the case with the weaver, for whom there must further be taken into account the rent of a place for his loom, and the time which he loses in carrying home his work, his expences are increased 30 cent. at least per day, or 90 francs per year.

" Thus every unmarried workman has in this

case a deficit of 79 fr. 75 cent. ; a father of two children from seven to ten years old a deficit of 186 fr. 70 cent. ; and lastly, a father of two children under seven a deficit of 294 fr. 65 cent.

“ Melancholy as the result of this table is, we must further remark, that we have set down 20 cent. for the loaf of bread, whereas it costs 24 cent. ; that we have stated the daily wages at 1 fr. 75 cent., while they amount at most to 1 fr. 50 cent.—that we have supposed the workman to be employed all the year round, while many can find only occasional employment, and a great number none at all—that finally our calculation applies solely to unmarried workmen, or such as have but two children. Hence you may judge, if you can without shuddering, what must be the situation of a workman who has three, four, five, or even six children.”

The Report then concludes thus: “ Humanity therefore requires, as the first relief due to the labouring classes, the abolition—and as speedily as possible—of the indirect taxes and the *octroi*, which, if it is absolutely necessary, may then be imposed on the wealthy classes without exception.

“ In presenting these painful reflections, in which we have been constantly guided by an ardent desire for the maintenance of order and tranquillity, let us take the liberty to add : Happy will it be if the too long subsisting misery of the great number does not in the end call forth dangers for those who have never acted otherwise than for their own interest.”

Let me once more remind the reader that it is no



French operative, no republican, but members of the municipal council, one of whom is still adjunct of the mayor, who here lift up their voices in behalf of their distressed countrymen.

I need scarcely remark that since the presentation of the Report in 1829, every thing has been left just in the same state that it was. In December, 1831, M. Lelong, adjunct of the mayor of Rouen, and one of the members of the above-mentioned commission, drew up a memorial entitled, "Considerations on the Distresses of certain Classes of Workmen, particularly in the department of the Lower Seine," which was likewise presented to the municipal council, and is deposited in the archives of the Mairie at Rouen.

In this Memorial the author gives tables, showing the expences and receipts of the factory work-people, of the wages paid them for the different sorts of work, and those paid to weavers, and another exhibiting the expences and income of one hundred workmen in a factory with a steam-engine of twelve horse-power, for six months:—

"We see by these tables," says the author, in his remarks upon them, "that the wool-spinners are better off than the weavers"—the number of whom, not earning sufficient to maintain themselves, is calculated by M. Lelong at 65,000. "Nevertheless, out of 100 employed in a factory worked by a steam-engine of twelve horse-power, 60 are not able to procure the most urgent necessities, as in six months they are minus 2094 fr. 74 cent. The other 40



have, on the other hand, a surplus of 2749 fr. 50 cent. But we must bear in mind that all these are supposed to be unmarried, or widowers without children, free from all incumbrance, and having only themselves to provide for. If each of them had an aged father, a wife, or daughter, incapable of work, one or several children, to support, how different would be his situation ! I must also observe, that these calculations, already melancholy enough, are made from the wages paid in one of our best manufactories in the city, and if there are others in which equal regularity and economy prevail, which have as good implements, and whose arrangements are as perfect, I can affirm that it is not surpassed by any. No one can doubt that these circumstances permit the workman to earn more. In those which are not in the above predicament, the number of workmen who cannot earn sufficient to pay for the most urgent necessities must inevitably be much greater. The smaller spinning-factories, the machinery of which is worked by hand, by horses, and even by fire-engines, which are liable to accidents that compel the work-people to stand still, number few or none that can live by the produce of their labour.

“Individual optimists may perhaps tell me that all this is not possible ; that, if the produce of labour is not greater than is here stated, the wants of the workman are likewise not so considerable, or he must long since have died of hunger and misery. To these I reply, that in the expences of the workman I have included his lodging, which he does not pay ;

his clothing, which he does not renew once in two years; the washing of his rags, which he wears in their dirt; that he sends his children into the streets to beg; that he himself, instead of spending 95 cent. for his food, lives upon one sou's worth of bread and one of potatoes, and that he gets his drink at the nearest pump.

“Let me then ask them, in my turn, if there are many domestic animals which work so hard and so long, which are so ill fed, so ill lodged, and if most of these unfortunate creatures must not envy those animals the very straw on which they lie?”

The author then shows that the consumption of all the productions of the country has fallen off with the increasing poverty of the working classes, and strives to prove that the merchants, shopkeepers, and agriculturists, are suffering from the same cause. He proves the inadequacy of workshops and factories of beneficence, and thus concludes:—

“The landed proprietors must support the government in all the measures that it employs to remedy this evil. They are all responsible partners in a great concern, which is suffering, languishing, and declining: it behoves them then to unite their talents, their efforts, and their sacrifices, not only to prevent great losses, but perhaps to obviate a tremendous catastrophe, which may perhaps advance with redoubled speed as the evil increases. Wo to society when, out of obsequiousness, selfishness, or want of courage, people flinch from difficulties! Have not means been found to give the emigrants

a thousand millions? But who has the better right to claim such a sacrifice—he who defended his country under all emergencies, without ever betraying it for gold and honours, or he who . . .

“The rent of houses in Rouen, even in the most frequented quarters, has already fallen one-eighth; and it will not be long before a like decline takes place in the country. Should any one conceive my statements to be founded on error, let him confute them. But let me beg that none would turn away his eyes to spare himself the pain of beholding the deplorable state of our social position.

“If I were asked whether I foresee what will happen if things are suffered to go on as they have done for some time, I would answer, without reserve, that I think I can foresee it, but I dare not say what I see in the future. I shall only repeat that I have spoken of a volcano, which may open and swallow up those who have no foresight, unless France, the great nation, like a man attacked by consumption or any other insidious disease, languishes, falls, and dies, without a struggle. But this is not probable, not possible. A colossal giant cannot perish like a frail, weak creature. Before he expires, he will muster all the force of his wonderful muscles, and leave behind him traces of his tremendous strength. In conclusion, I say, ‘Solve the riddle of the Sphinx, or she will tear you in pieces!’”

A startling denunciation this! The future here appears before us like an awfully dark thunder-



cloud, and the insurrections in Lyons were only the first flashes that burst from its womb.

Had this been written by a self-styled friend of the people, he would have been called to account for it at the assizes; for these friends of the people, *par excellence*, have too often shown that they love only one part of the people and hate the rest. And this hatred has parched and destroyed the seed, even the good seed, which they sowed, for love alone is fruitful. And out of love to all, we ought to take under our protection those who suffer, and show those who do not suffer that we are defending their own cause when we strive to relieve the distresses of one class of the people, that we provide for the future safety of the rich by bettering the present condition of the poor. But to pretend to serve the latter by cursing the former is insulting humanity, and perilling its interests. These, however, are not the most dangerous enemies of the existing order of things. It has more dangerous ones, namely, those who will not even acknowledge that the Sphinx of time has given the present a riddle to solve. They will have to repent their infatuation, if, as the author of the above Memorial apprehends, the Sphinx should become a ravenous beast.

Since 1836, however, the state of the factory work-people in Rouen has improved. Superior hands among the wool-spinners now earn about 2 fr. 50 cent., and though the crisis produced a stagnation, the manufacturers seem not to have been obliged — perhaps, indeed, as the insurrections in



Lyons made a deep impression, and roused the workmen to a sort of consciousness of their strength, they did not dare—to reduce the rate of wages, but only diminished the work, which, after all, comes nearly to the same point for the workman. The daily earnings of the weavers, on the other hand, are upon an average from 1 fr. to 1 fr. 30 cent., so that, even when they have constant work, they must be continually in arrear, and live at the same time in the most penurious manner.

But, if a momentary improvement has taken place, other circumstances may arise to-morrow, and produce changes, as in 1831. The wound is only cicatrised, not healed; nay, it seems as if it were only spreading further and deeper beneath the eschar.

But how is it to be healed? Ay, there is the fearful riddle! And then our timid homœopathic age and world, which recoil with fear and trembling from every radical idea, every radical cure! Were I acquainted with the means of solving the riddle, and to communicate them, the narrow-minded mortals would cry out, "Stone him! the blasphemer!"

I shall therefore advert to only one, and that the worst side of this evil—the children. In all the manufacturing cities and towns of France have been established schools, into which the children of the work-people are admitted gratuitously. But this measure has produced little fruit. I have already observed, that I doubt the moral benefit of such schools, when the children are obliged to work the

greater part of the day in the factory, and are there exposed to the brutality of a spinner. But the opportunity for instruction is not even embraced. At Marom, near Rouen, a manufacturing village of 3000 inhabitants, there are schools of this kind, and only three children of poor persons, and fifty of inhabitants in easy circumstances, attend them, though they have every thing gratis. The cause of this circumstance, as far as the poor workmen are concerned, is self-evident. They earn only just sufficient to support themselves, and therefore are compelled to send their children, as soon as they are strong enough, not to the school, but to the factory. These earn there from six to ten sous for sixteen or seventeen hours' work. Even this small sum the parents cannot afford to lose by sending their children to school. The community—consider that this is one of the points involved in the riddle of the Sphinx—might forbid children to work longer than half a day in the factory, and compensate the family for the wages of the other half, for the hours which the child passes at school. It would then have time to learn while playing, to go to the school of life.

Perhaps statesmen may not relish this proposal, and I am almost afraid that they will not. Let philanthropists then unite and do what must be done, if they would not have brutality combine sooner or later with misery and semi-consciousness of it to form a rapacious beast.

The greatest benefactors of mankind are the inventors of machines; and the inventor of the first

## CHAPTER XXIX.

Artisans; their desire of information—Lectures established by the Society of Emulation—Spirit prevailing among the Operatives of France—Anticipations—Efforts for the Reformation of Juvenile Offenders—Messrs. Lecointe and Duhamel establish a School in the prison of Rouen—Formation of a Society for bettering the condition of young Convicts—Success of its Exertions—Visit to the School—Awful Idea suggested by it.

THE artisans of Rouen stand on a much higher step of the social ladder than the factory workmen. The revolution of July has produced a most extraordinary effect upon them. In Paris it was chiefly they who decided the conflict, and persons of this class, coming from the capital, diffused by their narratives the spirit which had excited them to action there. This circumstance has upon the whole increased their self-esteem, and that is a benefit; for he only has any worth who values himself. The prominent part taken by the public press has also produced an effect. A considerable number of the artisans throughout all France soon attached themselves to the different oppositions, and these distributed among them political writings, some good, others bad. The universal consequence was an increasing desire to inform themselves, to



read ; and thus the artisans constitute at present the majority of the subscribers to all the cheap editions of the French classics. You may be sure of finding at the lodgings of most of them a tolerable store of knowledge, and a little library, containing Buffon, Corneille, Beranger, J. J. Rousseau, Courier, &c. And whatever we may think of one or other of these writers, still we cannot deny that the money expended on their works is better laid out than if it were spent as formerly at the *cabarets*.

The desire of information awakened in the class of artisans was soon productive of this effect, that men belonging to the higher classes of society felt themselves called to gratify it, as far as lay in their power. Never was there yet any want of devoted hearts, as soon as they were seriously summoned to act by the spirit of the time and circumstances. Such was the case here.

In 1834, the Société d'Emulation in Rouen proposed to give public courses of lectures on commercial law, book-keeping, and geometry, and disinterested friends of the people came forward to offer their time, their labour, and their talents. In the first year, these different lectures were attended by 216 young tradesmen, artisans, and even a few factory labourers, namely, commercial law, 72, book-keeping, 92, geometry, 52 : and the prizes offered by the above-mentioned society were gained by a tinman, a shopkeeper, a porcelain-worker, and a smith, in commercial law ; by a porcelain-worker, a shopkeeper, and weaver, in book-keeping ; and by a



cloth-presser, two young shopkeepers, and a last-maker, in geometry.

In the following year, 1835, two other courses of public lectures were instituted by the municipal council,—on natural philosophy by M. Duboc, and on chemistry by M. Girardin. I have frequently attended the lectures of the latter. The first time I arrived as the clock was striking twelve. I had reckoned upon the academical grace of a quarter of an hour, but I had miscalculated. The hall was crammed; the very stairs and windows were crowded with auditors, as if to catch the words of the lecturer in their flight. It was literally my lot not to hear any of them. Next Sunday, I went half an hour earlier, and found just one vacant place. Full four hundred artisans, working men, shopkeepers, and even elderly citizens, were assembled, and listened with a devout attention, such as I had never witnessed in my own country at the lectures of the most eminent professors.

The two lecturers on chemistry and natural philosophy published their Sunday lectures every week. Of M. Girardin's popular chemistry a thousand copies were printed, and by the close of the year there was not one to be had; so that the lecturer, who certainly undertook the duty as a labour of love only, made in the end a good speculation of it. While I was in Rouen, a new edition of his chemical course, of 3000 copies, was in the press. This single fact says more than any thing that I could add.

Individual workmen and artisans have been enabled, by the instruction received here to better their condition very materially. A weaver has been appointed *instituteur primaire*; a calico-printer has set up for mathematical master, and as such is sought after by the best schools in Rouen; a clerk in a manufactory has become, after a brilliant examination, surveyor of the roads in the department of the Lower Seine. I could mention other instances of the like kind, but these may suffice.

In France the desire for information is almost universal. Only furnish the workmen and artisans with an opportunity of learning, and they will throng to avail themselves of it. Not long since, one hundred and fifty working men at Elbeuf presented a petition to the municipal council, praying that it would make arrangements for public lectures on natural philosophy and chemistry to be held there, as they were in Rouen.

I became acquainted at Rouen with a journeyman printer, who entered into correspondence with Guizot, while minister, respecting the Sources of French History, publishing under his patronage, and who proved to him that the work of an author—I have forgotten his name—mentioned in the prospectus as inedited, had been given to the public in the works of Leibnitz, upon which this author was struck out of the list. Such an instance, indeed, is but an exception, perhaps an accident: on the other hand, the effects of the eagerness of the labouring class in France to improve itself are every

where apparent. The papers recently published a letter from one who had been a working man to Beranger, and the answer of the latter to the former, who, through Beranger's poems, had become a musician, a composer, and a teacher of music. I have already mentioned Lebreton and Kilbey. A cooper in Dunkirk has sung the sea and its shores; a cabinetmaker at Fontainebleau the forest and its ancient trees; a baker at Nimes, the ruins of Roman edifices in his native town; and a hairdresser at Agen, of love in the tone of the troubadours.

A new life pervades the entire body of French operatives, and this movement must certainly have some day a considerable influence on political affairs. That influence indeed is already active, and it is only the dull eye which is incapable of perceiving the germ till it has grown up into a tree that can overlook it. What may be the consequences of this metamorphosis of one of the most important classes of the people, it is impossible to foresee: all then that one can yet do is to call attention to the matter. Those who come after us will possess the means of appreciating both.

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We have seen what a wretched life the children of the factory work-people lead, that they are turned out by their parents when very young, that they work as long as they can get employment, and starve when there is none to be had. Without any moral cultivation, it would be a wonder if a con-



siderable number of them were not brought annually before the courts of justice, to account for the offences into which they have been led by distress and by their moral condition.

From the year 1832 to 1835, 171 children were sent to the prison of Rouen, the Bicêtre; of these 61 were born in Rouen, 12 at Dieppe, 8 at Havre, 5 in Paris, 10 at Elbeuf, and the other 75 in different communes. The number is large enough; but it must be confessed that, considering the descriptions given of the state of the work-people in Rouen, the only wonder is that it is no larger.

These young criminals were, till a few years since, left to themselves, or rather to the instructions of the adult prisoners grown grey in guilt, as they still are in most of the prisons in France. When once they had crossed the threshold, on account perhaps of a theft committed from distress, or vagrancy, their destiny was fixed; they were marked out for the career of crime, which led a great number of them to the galleys. Between the years 1826 and 1831, 233 young criminals of this kind were released from the Bicêtre; 137 of them relapsed into their former courses, and 50 were sent to Gaillon, the central prison of the department of the Eure, or to the galleys.

It is grievous to see how long systems universally condemned as vicious can be allowed to subsist. There is scarcely a reflecting person in France who has not heard or read a hundred times that it is a real crime to leave young offenders to themselves or to



the example of practised villains; who does not know that it is a duty incumbent on society to attend to these unfortunate creatures, and to provide for their future welfare by education and habits of industry. It is nevertheless but rarely, and only by way of exception, that any thing is done to lead them out of the path of guilt. If one could survey the entire course pursued by the murderer till he became sufficiently hardened in guilt to raise the fatal weapon, we should find but too often, perhaps twice out of three times, that on society itself falls the responsibility for that crime, on account of which it at last inexorably demands the life, or at least the liberty, of the culprit.

All this is the more painful when we see how little is very often needed to alter, to amend. Two gentlemen of Rouen, Messrs. Lecointe and Duhamel, furnish a striking proof of this in regard to juvenile offenders. They observed their deplorable condition, resolved to improve it, and devoted a portion of their time to this purpose. On the 1st of February, 1833, they proposed to the gratuitous cantonal committee for primary instruction in Rouen to establish a school of mutual instruction in the Bicêtre; on the 21st of the same month it was opened, and those two philanthropists themselves undertook the task of giving the requisite instruction to the juvenile prisoners. From that time they were without intermission the directors of the school, gave lessons for several hours every day, and soon carried their plan for the reformation of the young culprits

still farther. On the 13th of May, 1833, they proposed to the mayor to assign 4,000 francs to the administration of the prison for the purpose of establishing shoemakers', tailors', weavers', and cabinet-makers' workshops. The proposal was adopted.

Instruction and employment were the means by which they hoped to secure the future welfare of their protégés. But it was not sufficient to transform the young culprits in the prison into new creatures by these two levers, if, at the expiration of their confinement, they were to be turned out into the world without protection or provision, and loaded with the curse of that prejudice which rests upon every one who has been the inmate of a prison. Of this their two patrons soon became thoroughly sensible; and so at their instigation there was founded, on the 26th of December, 1833, a "*Société pour le patronage des jeunes libérés*," which in the first year collected 2780 francs, and 10,199 till the 1st of June, 1835.

Messrs. Lecoq and Duhamel continued to superintend the instruction of the boys as before; and the Society undertook to provide places for them after their liberation. On these points I shall quote a few words from the reports of this society. In regard to the first, we are told: "The position of the juvenile prisoners is totally changed within these two years. They have a consciousness of good and evil; the instructions which they receive make them acquainted with their duties towards

God; they pray together, and devoutly attend divine worship. Almost all of them can read, write, and cipher; the rest of their time is devoted to the learning of a trade, and several of these youths have been placed out as journeymen and are earning their living."

With respect to the providing of places for the offenders on their release, the report of the Society for 1835 says, "The two-fold remark—that young criminals are more numerous in manufacturing towns than in agricultural districts, and that greater morality prevails in the latter—has led us to perceive that the young convicts on their liberation ought as much as possible to be employed in agriculture, that they may be the less exposed to bad company, and become habituated to an industrious life. But an impediment that is frequently met with prevented the execution of this plan.

"The majority of these convicts have been from their youth left to themselves; they have had to endure all the consequences of indigence, and their physical powers have suffered. You would be in general mistaken if you were to estimate their age from their personal appearance. Others prefer less laborious occupations, and we are obliged to give way to their inclinations on this point, as it would not be advisable to change their vocation.

"The prejudice which rejects the liberated convicts is likewise deeply rooted. How many refusals have we not met with! How many are there who entertain philanthropic sentiments in theory and



deny them in practice ! This disposition, however, has neither surprised nor deterred us.

“ But if we have experienced many refusals, we must, on the other hand, do justice to the humane disposition of those who have accepted our proposals. Artisans little favoured by fortune were generous and confiding ; our convicts, admitted to the domestic hearth, became children of the family ; they here found good advice, and the best instruction for practising their trade. One of these artisans said to us with emotion, ‘ I was myself a forlorn orphan without resources. A benevolent man took pity on my situation ; he generously taught me his trade, and it is no doubt owing to him that I have become a good citizen and a good father. I will now repay what he gave me.’ He has kept his word, and trained a clever workman, whose livelihood is secured and whose conduct is exemplary.”

Farther on the report says, “ Wherever it has been possible, we have endeavoured to re-knit family ties. Thus many children have been given back to their parents, and their position secured by means of succours cautiously granted.”

Thus instruction, work, the habitude of it, a trade, and, as far as possible, a secured livelihood, are the means employed to give back the young convicts to society, and to guard them against a relapse. The results for a number of years have been as follows :—



In the Year	Released Juvenile Convicts.	Relapsed.				Sent to the Gal-leys, or to the Cen- tral Pri-son of the De- partment of l'Eure.	Total of Re- lapses.
		Once.	Twice.	Thrice	4 times		
1826	16	5	3	3	2		
1827	23	7	3	2	1		
1828	20	5	—	1	—		
1829	25	5	4	2	3		
1830	20	6	1	1	—		
1831	29	6	2	1	1		
	133	34	16	10	7	50	117
For the Years 1833 to 1835.							
1833	38	3	—	—	—		
1834	36	5	2	—	—		
1835	47	6	—	1	—		
	121	14	2	1	—	—	17

Thus while, in the years 1826-1831, out of 133 young convicts who were released, 117 relapsed, after the opening of the school and the institution of the Société pour le Patronage, there were only 17 relapses out of 121 released convicts. This might almost be called a wonderful result, but it is a perfectly natural one, and the only wonderful part of the matter is that there are perhaps persons to be found who will wonder at it.

M. Duhamel had the kindness to take me to the prison to see his school and his pupils. I have a secret horror of every place that is called a prison, and when the lock of the first door was turned upon me, my blood ran cold. Nothing but the certain hope of finding in one of those prisons, which have hitherto been only a disgrace to society, an institution worthy of man and of humanity, enabled me to conquer my inward repugnance. Five or six other

doors opened to admit us, and were locked again when we had passed, before we reached the quarters of the children. These were just at dinner. From sixty to seventy boys, apparently from ten to fifteen years old, were seated at two long tables. At the extremity of these two tables was a third, at which sat three boys. All were dressed in dark gray jackets and trowsers, a cap, and wooden shoes. The three boys at the small table, which overlooked the other two, were the serjeant-major and two serjeants. The other convicts were divided into small parties, each of which had a corporal or serjeant at its head; and the serjeants and corporals had the distinction usual among soldiers, a linen or silver stripe on the sleeve.

When we entered, all rose without leaving their places. But in the way in which all of them, in chorus, greeted their benefactor with "Bon jour, Monsieur Duhamel," there was such a respectful familiarity as I have very rarely witnessed. This salutation did my heart good, and it would have sufficed to convince me that a great deal is done here for the welfare of these children.

They had nearly finished dinner when we entered. All of them still had upon their plates some wholesome-looking meat and vegetables. Whether they have meat every day I cannot tell, though I believe M. Duhamel did inform me. It was the moral result only that I was interested about.

When they had done dinner, the serjeant-major began a simple, but on that account the more im-

pressive, prayer, which the other boys devoutly pronounced after him. The young commander then gave orders for leaving the dining-room. His subordinates, the serjeants and corporals, repeated the word of command, and the little troop left the hall in military step. In this manner, they marched through the first court into a larger, where they drew up at the command of their leaders. Here each corporal examined his division, ascertained whether clothes and shoes were in a good state, whether hands and faces were duly washed, and noted down any rent in jacket or trowsers, and any neglect of cleanliness. At length the commander ordered them to break their ranks, on which the lads were allowed to walk about in the court for half an hour, which they did three, four, or five, arm-in-arm together. One of the serjeants, *l'officier du jour*, retained the superintendence, in order to prevent any thing improper.

I must confess that at the first moment this military system made a disagreeable impression, though I was not disposed to find fault. I had seen something of the sort in private schools, and there found this apish mimicry as contemptible and unpractical as possible. To make military puppets of children is a mortal sin, a relic of the Napoleon mania, which is far from being entirely banished from France. But here, in the prison, on further consideration, the thing did not appear so unpractical. The greater number of these boys were vagabonds, accustomed to the most disorderly and irre-



gular life. To habituate them to order, regularity, and cleanliness, is certainly one of the most difficult tasks of their teachers, and I believe that it would not be easy for them to devise any better way of accomplishing this object than to subject the pupils to strict military discipline, though, in some respects, it is certainly liable to objection.

When the time for recreation was over, the voice of the serjeant-major called the convicts again into rank and file, and they marched to the school-room. I need not enter into the mode of proceeding in a school of mutual instruction. The convicts here learned reading, writing, and arithmetic, and a considerable number of them had already arrived at a degree of perfection in those three branches of instruction, which is rarely attained, and scarcely ever surpassed, in the lower schools.

For the improvement of their morals they receive religious instruction; but the principal point, after all, consists in the daily admonitions of their philanthropic teachers, in employment, in the instruction itself, in order, and, lastly, in the gradually-awakening consciousness that they are no longer abandoned by God and the world, and in the knowledge of the sacrifices that worthy men are making for them. The good conduct of the convicts procures them the different ranks of serjeant-major, serjeant, and corporal, by which their youthful ambition is soon kindled, and they are impelled to better courses. Lastly, the Society, from time to time, makes the best, most diligent, and best-behaved scholars a



present in money of 50 or 25 francs, which is deposited for them in the savings' chest.

Before I left the prison, I went with M. Duhamel to see the brushmakers' workshops, where the boys work after school-hours under the direction of a master from the city; for, of course, the young convicts are kept as much apart as possible from the other prisoners.

I must own that I have seldom visited a public institution from which I have carried home with me a feeling of such profound satisfaction. It not only did my heart good to think that so many unfortunate creatures were here regained for society, but perhaps, in a still greater degree, that the good-will of two excellent men was sufficient to produce this result. The first step only is difficult, and costs sacrifices; this once taken, all is accomplished, and the rest is only a question of earlier or later. Messrs. Lecointe and Duhamel formed the plan of bettering the condition of the young convicts, and because they set about the work in good earnest their efforts were successful. They became themselves the teachers of the prisoners, and the results from this beginning followed almost without any exertion. Workshops were established, and a Society instituted to provide for the future subsistence of the convicts.

Thus all that could well be done has been performed for the department of the Lower Seine, and there needs but another step to communicate the benefits of similar institutions to all France. For

this effect, indeed, the powers of an individual are inadequate ; but when we see that the Society for the Patronage of Juvenile Convicts is applying to the government for the erection of central prisons for its protégés throughout all France, and that this application is founded on the most incontestable, the most triumphant results ; if the speedy establishment of such central institutions is no longer doubtful ; it is the more evident that a public benefit, if but a single individual sets in good earnest about effecting it in his own limited sphere, will soon force itself into general notice and adoption. Mark this well, ye philanthropists !

On my way home, I passed a factory, which I had visited on the preceding day, and there a new idea darted across my mind. It was this : It is evident then that a factory workman in Rouen, if he loves his children and has their welfare at heart, must say to them : " Go and steal !" Shocking ! and the truer the more shocking. Is it not as if man is forced to show his neighbour by deeds that he has it in his power to do him an injury before that neighbour will give himself any concern about him ? In Rouen, there are thousands of children of working people who are turned adrift in the world without any instruction, who share hunger and cold with their parents, whose bodies and souls are alike ruined by the most unnatural toil from their earliest youth. Not a creature cares about them. Not till the moment that they become criminals does the community deem them worthy of notice, and

then in general only to subject them to the rigour of the law, but here in Rouen—thanks to the interference of the humane—to treat them kindly, to instruct them, to give them a trade, and to provide for their future welfare. In France, you may frequently hear of persons who commit some petty offence, that they may find in prison a protection from cold and hunger ; and if there should really be erected all over the country institutions for the support and instruction of juvenile criminals, it would be very extraordinary if, by and by, fathers did not say to their children : “ I love you, and, because I love you, I desire you to steal ! ”

So long as the community does not attack the root of the evil, so long as it does not strive, instead of healing external ulcers, to purify the juices of the body, so long will it be affected by local complaints of that kind. But from the day that society, instead of providing for juvenile offenders, shall take under its protection the juvenile non-offenders, who have the misfortune to be marked by the stamp of its wrath as future pupils of criminal schools, shall instruct them, keep them to work, and provide for their future welfare, from that day criminal schools must be superfluous. And “ to this complexion must it come at last.”—The Sphinx ! the Sphinx !



## CHAPTER XXX.

Spirit of the People of Rouen—Antiquity of the City—Piety of its Ancient Inhabitants—Society for building and finishing Churches—Fraternity of the Immaculate Conception—Legend of an Adulterous Canon—Prizes for Compositions on the Immaculate Conception—The Privilege of St. Romain—Right assumed by the Clergy to save one capital Convict every year—Ceremonies observed on the occasion—Popular Almanacs—La Bibliothèque bleue—The Lovers' Catechism—Catechism of Marriageable Girls—General Character of the People in and around Rouen.

A HOUSE, four walls, a door, two or three windows and a roof—a street, a double row of houses—neither more nor less. And yet, only cast your eyes on these stone and wooden coffins of the living, only stroll through a street, and you know, or can at least guess, of what spirit the inmates are the offspring. If Rouen reminds us of the old German imperial cities, this resemblance is not merely external; the people, who dwell and still dwell in those houses, who traverse those streets, are much alike in both. The spirit of commerce is that of a free imperial city, which, after the lapse of ages, cannot forget that it once belonged to the great German Hansa;



that of Cologne, for instance, which a few years since exerted itself to the utmost to prevent the loss of its right of staple. The citizen of Rouen is a *bon-vivant* too, though the Frenchman in general is no match in this respect for a burgher of Frankfurt, Munich, or Vienna. A dinner in Rouen is a real affair of state ; and there is in that city a regular cramming season, during which all the gossips of both sexes give invitations to one another. Thirty dishes for eight or ten persons, and twenty-four for dessert, are a mere bagatelle.

Cologne was formerly called "the Holy City," and Rouen, "la Ville de la Vierge." In Cologne, there were as many churches as days in the year ; in Rouen, just one hundred years ago, there were sixty-one churches and chapels, and forty-eight convents of monks and nuns. The inhabitants of Rouen, like the Normans in general, were extremely pious. We find in their history at every step traces of their catholic sentiments.

In the middle of the twelfth century, an association was formed at Chartres for building new churches, and completing such as were begun ; and this masonic fraternity found in Normandy a more cordial response than any where else. In all the towns and in every village it met with willing helpmates. Men and women joined it, confessed and communicated, forgave their enemies and asked their forgiveness, before they were admitted into the society. The superior of the brotherhood gave directions where they were to work and what they

were to do. Accordingly, great and small, rich and poor, male and female, harnessed themselves to the cars, and, singing hymns, and regardless of storms and weather, drew them, laden with stones and timber, with which the masons and carpenters erected gothic churches, the offspring and witnesses of that enthusiasm, the tombstones of Catholicism. The archbishop gave his blessing to all who joined the fraternity, and the people told of miracles which attested the power of this benediction. The people, the great mass, were still stanch believers ; but the more knowing, the masons, the masters, guessed already what was to happen. And they chiselled their doubts upon the cathedral itself, in those bold figures which we meet with in almost all gothic churches, and which satirised the dissolute lives of the monks and nuns.

This enthusiasm was the last flickering of the flame which had once given light to the world, and it did not last long enough to finish the greater number at least of the larger edifices, such as the cathedral of Cologne, and the church of St. Ouen at Rouen. But when the work was completed, or only half completed, the people stood in wonder before the gigantic structures which they had seen rising from the earth as if by magic, which they had themselves assisted to build. And next day, no longer comprehending the power which had created these edifices, they related that the devil had built Notre Dame in Paris and the cathedral of Cologne.

The completion of the half finished gothic cathe-

drals has often been under discussion. And if this were still possible, it would be a crime against the spirit of history, which speaks out so plainly in them in their present state. They were a ruin before they were finished, because the spirit which had created or imagined them was dead, before they could be completed.

Another fraternity in Rouen, which had branches at Caen and many other places in Normandy, was that of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. The people of Rouen have done a great deal to gain for their city the name of "Ville de la Sainte Vierge." Her image once stood at the corner of every street, on the outside of every house; and many of these images have survived the Revolution, which, upon the whole, was much less severe in its persecution of such figures than the Reformation. The fraternity of the Immaculate Conception was really a society for the propagation of the worship of the Virgin Mary; and such was its success in Normandy that her festival soon went by no other name than "la fête aux Normands."

How this fraternity originated it is impossible to say, unless like me you give implicit credit to popular tradition. But in this case that authority is not consistent. Some assert that William the Conqueror sent an abbot Helfin to Denmark, and that he, having in a storm offered up a prayer on the immaculate conception to the mother of God, was saved by the Virgin, and instituted the fraternity in honour of her. Others maintain that a nameless



canon of Rouen was its founder. The history, as given in the *Legende dorée* (edit. 1531) is as follows :—

The pious canon prayed often and fervently to the Virgin Mary. But the good man was of flesh and blood, and so the devil once played him and his patroness a scurvy trick. He kindled a flame in his bosom, which made him forget, on the other side of the Seine, both the canon and Mary, and the immaculate conception, and drove him into the bed of the handsome wife of a peasant. The malicious fiend was no doubt highly delighted. Having come to the Seine, on his way back to Rouen, the adulterer got into a boat ; there he again became the pious canon, and began praying his *Horæ* to the Virgin. But the devil was impatient to carry home his plump, goodly prey ; so, as the reverend man was pronouncing the words, “ Ave Maria, gratia plena,” he capsized the boat, and hastened with the soul of the sinner the shortest way to hell, where he had to suffer three days for his peccadillo. On the fourth, the Virgin Mary took pity on him, and summoned the devil before her. The chronicle must have had a shorthand-writer at the examination, for the questions and answers are given verbatim.

*Mary.* Why dost thou thus unjustly afflict the soul of our servant ?

We ought to have it, replied the spirit of darkness, because it was caught doing our works.

*Mary.* If the soul of this canon ought to belong



to the one whose works it was doing, then it ought to be our's, for it was reciting our matins when ye seized it, and ye are the more guilty for having acted towards us with so little consideration.

Now, it seems to me—and I have studied the law—that, according to all the principles of jurisprudence, the devil was in legitimate possession; but even in the other world it is perhaps difficult to enforce one's right against queens. Be this as it may, the devil was frightened out of his wits, and scampered off. The Virgin Mary then took the soul of the canon on her arm, and carried it back to its body; whereupon the Seine, in which the corpse still lay, parted, and thus the canon was enabled to walk dry-shod to the bank. On reaching it, his reverence made the following speech to Mary; which, as it would lose much in translation, I give in the original words: "*Ma très chère Dame, Vierge toute belle, mère très agréable de Jesus, mon divin Maître, que vous rendrois-je pour les bienfaits ineffaçables dont vous venez de me combler? Vous m'avez delivré de la gueule du Lion, et mon ame de tourmens très cruels de l'enfer.*" The Virgin replied: "*Je vous prie de ne pas tomber dorénavant dans le peché d'adultère, de peur que votre dernière fin soit pire que la première. Je vous prie encore que dans la suite vous célébrez la fête de ma conception le 8 Decembre et que vous la fassiez célébrer partout. Amen!*" From that time the canon turned hermit, and was the first and most zealous propagator of the festival of the immaculate conception.

Pious as were the brothers and sisters of this society, they built no cathedrals. Those days were past. On the contrary, the fraternity was turned, in honour of the immaculate conception, into a sort of academy, which awarded annual prizes for those who had best sung, described, or discoursed on the event. During the 15th century, a prize, consisting of a palm, was first offered for the best poem. Towards the close of the same century, (1493) a second prize—a hat wreathed with laurel—was added. At a later period, the best ballad gained a gold rose, the best ode a silver looking-glass, the best sonnet a gold ring, and the best epigram a laurel wreath. Lastly, a Monsieur Jean Baptiste Boisin, Seigneur de Bonnetot et Conseiller du Roi, et premier président de la cour des comptes, aides et finances, assigned a gold cross for the best French discourse, that should last not less than a quarter of an hour, treating of the immaculate conception. Nothing was to be introduced into it from fables or poetry, and the proofs of the circumstance were to be derived only from the bible, ecclesiastical history, and natural history. I took a good deal of pains in searching for such a speech, as I should like to see the natural history evidences; but my trouble was thrown away.

I have read droll poems on this subject, which, if they were to be printed now-a-days in Rome, would be regarded as at least high treason against the Virgin Mary, and punished as such by the Christian judges of the popish capital. The devil of irony peeps out of every line of them.

The people of Rouen, however, took all that was said for pure earnest; and when, in 1528, one Pierre Barrus made himself merry about the simplicity of the good folk, they were furious, seized the delinquent, accused him of blasphemy against the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mother, and burned him without mercy after a short trial.

The clergy of Rouen saved many other culprits by the privilege of St. Romain, also called the *privilege de la fierté*. This archbishop, whose history swarms with miracles, went forth to encounter a dragon, which was making great havoc in the environs of Rouen, and, as he could not find a priest to accompany him, he took for his attendant a murderer under sentence of death. This man strangled the formidable monster with the bishop's stole. In commemoration of this miracle, and of the aid received by the saint from the criminal, the clergy assumed the right of saving every year a delinquent, with the exception of persons guilty of high treason, whom not even a miracle could deliver.

A short time before Ascension Day, three canons of the chapter went to the prisons, heard the confessions of all the prisoners, and wrote them down. On Ascension Day, they again repaired to the prisons, to see whether any fresh prisoners had arrived, and then went to the assembled chapter to read their reports, after the chapter had sung *Veni creator spiritus*; whereupon, it proceeded to the choice of the criminal who was to be pardoned. The chaplain of the fraternity of St. Romain carried the



name of the favoured culprit to the parliament, which, after a solemn musical mass, opened the paper containing the name, and had it read to them. They then went through the proceedings afresh, condemned him, and informed him of his pardon. He was now delivered up to the chaplain of the fraternity, who, accompanied by the councillors and the civic guard, led him away, removed the chain from his legs in the street, and put it into his hand, after which he went with him to St. Romain's chapel. The people assembled for the procession went thither too.

Meanwhile, tidings of the confirmation of the pardon were carried to the chapter. The bells of the cathedral proclaimed this confirmation, on which the church was opened, and in presence of the congregation the written confessions of all the prisoners, excepting that of the pardoned criminal, were solemnly burned. The confession of the latter was delivered to him. All the relics in the city were collected, and, headed by those of St. Romain, borne before the chapter, which went in solemn procession, preceded by the archbishop, to the chapel of the saint. Here the archbishop addressed a discourse to the pardoned man, and, after he had recited his *confiteor*, laid his hands on his head, and granted him absolution. He was then conducted to the shrine containing the relics of St. Romain, which he had to lift up thrice, on which, crowned with flowers, and followed by the clergy and the multitude, he carried it to the principal church. Here mass was read, and



the whole assembly then returned to the chapel of St. Romain, where mass was again read, and where a priest held a discourse to the people concerning the criminal, his crime, his penitence, and his pardon. After this address, the priest, in token of reconciliation, handed a goblet of wine to the pardoned man, who drank it off, and finally went with the master of the fraternity of St. Romain to his house, where he supped and slept. Next day, he went once more to the principal church, heard mass in presence of the assembled chapter, and confessed, on which an ecclesiastic addressed another discourse to him, and he was formally dismissed.

It is refreshing to meet the clergy in such a career, and the more so as they have been oftener actuated by revenge than mercy. I have described this ceremony circumstantially, that the reader may compare it with the *auto-da-fés* of Spain, and ask himself, whether those flames, those shrieks, and those moans of the victims can produce a more powerful, or rather a more moral, effect upon the people than the touching scene where a priest looses the chains of a prisoner, where he presents him to the multitude as a victim rescued by religion, and, with the word pardon in the mouth of the people, exhorts to penitence, to amendment.

The whole ceremony, moreover, is characteristic of Normandy, as the *auto-da-fé* of Spain. In Normandy, too, victims of religious fanaticism have fallen in times of excitement, when the first ideas of reform began to be developed, when the quarrels

between the Calvinists and Catholics led to civil war; but never could the Inquisition strike permanent root in a soil in which the tree of liberty stood more firmly than almost any where else. For this reason, the clergy sought and found a different sphere of action, and went forth in procession, not to auto-da-fés, but to pardon a condemned criminal; and hence they held a festival of mercy, not of blood.

The faith of the Normans was always mixed up with a strong dose of superstition. You need but turn over the law journals of France for a single week, and you will be sure to meet with some Norman trial for witchcraft, which, indeed, does not terminate in the burning of the witches or wizards, but only in their committal to prison as swindlers.

It is in the country that superstition more especially prevails. The principal, nay, frequently the only books possessed by a peasant, are a prayer book and an almanac. These almanacs are of essential utility to enable one to form a correct judgment of the people, because they are written in their spirit, and correspond with their wants and circumstances. A few extracts from the "Almanach de l'an 1835," printed in Rouen, will therefore not be uninteresting. It contains recipes and sayings for every thing. It predicts the events of the year:—

De St. Paul la claire journée  
Nous dénote une bonne année;  
S'il fait vent nous aurons la guerre  
S'il neige ou pluit cherté sur la terre;  
Si l'on voit fort épais les brouillards  
Mortalité de toutes parts.

It then gives a "Prognostication perpetuelle, composée par les anciens philosophes, comme Pythagoras, Joseph le Juste, et plusieurs autres," showing, according as the first day of the year is Sunday, Monday, &c. whether the year will be prosperous, rich, poor, warm, whether there will be war or peace, and what not.

The almanac is the doctor of the people :—

Si tu fais tirer de ton bras  
Du sang le jour de Matthias,  
Il sera net tout l'année  
Sans fièvre te tiendra sain  
Jusqu'au retour de l'an prochain.

And again :—

Le jour de St. Gertrude l'on se fait doit  
Faire saigner au bras droit,  
Celui que ainsi fera  
Cette année les yeux clairs aura.

But, in spite of his superstition and of his belief in the oracles of dice and chance, the Norman continues to be upon the whole a tolerably practical man, and usually retains a pretty good share of what the French call *bon sens*, and we common sense. This the almanac attests in two or three specimens.

Lever à cinq, diner à neuf,  
Souper à cinq, coucher à neuf,  
Faites vivre d'ans nonante-neuf.

Un œuf d'une heure seulement,  
Pain d'un jour, oiseaux bien petits,  
Chair d'un an, poissons de dix,  
Cela fait vivre longuement.



Qui a bon lit, dedans ne dort,  
 Qui a bon pain, dedans ne mord,  
 Qui a du bien, n'en prend confort,  
 Autant vaudra-t-il qu'il fut mort.

This practical sense, combined with the benevolence peculiar to the Normans, though frequently disguised beneath a repulsive coldness of manner, I have again met with in a song sung by the little children in the streets of Rouen, while at play, to this effect :—

St. Pierre, St. Simon,  
 Gardez notre maison ;  
 S'il y vient un pauvre,  
 Baillez li [lui] l'aumône ;  
 S'il y vient un pelerin,  
 Baillez li de notre vin ;  
 S'il y vient un larron  
 Baillez li du lourd baton,  
 Pipi—i—i—i—i—i.

In the towns, the above-mentioned almanacs have ceased to possess any exclusive authority ; still there are people enough there who never give a treat or take an excursion till they have consulted an oracle of this kind ; and they frequently do the same on occasion of more important matters. Upon the whole, however, their influence is on the decline ; the hawkers cry them in the streets as *almanachs merveilleux*, *almanachs menteux*, &c. Of late years, too, the patriotic almanacs, the Napoleonic and republican, have gained the ascendancy in the towns, and found at least partial encouragement in the country, so that they threaten in time wholly to supersede the old ones.



The Norman towns, and indeed the provincial towns in general, have of late become more and more French. French levity, gallantry, coquetry, have gained a firmer footing in Rouen itself. I shall adduce evidence to this point also from the popular literature. There were published at Rouen, at the beginning of this century, a great number of popular books, called by the editor, M. Labbey, *La Bibliothèque bleue*. One of these books was entitled "Catechismus des Amants, par demandes et reponses, ou sont enseignées les principales maximes de l'amour et le devoir d'un veritable amant." In the first of these dialogues we find the following :—

*She.* Are you a lover ?

*He.* Yes, by the favour of Cupid.

*She.* What is a lover ?

*He.* A lover is a person who, after he has made a sincere and true declaration, seeks to make himself be loved by her whom he loves.

#### SECOND DIALOGUE.

*She.* What are the signs of a true lover ?

*He.* Attention, assiduity, sincerity, punctuality, and billets-doux.

*She.* What is sincerity ?

*He.* A strict accordance between what we say and what we mean.

*She.* What do you understand by the word billets-doux ?

*He.* A little compliment in writing which we

send to our mistress, when we cannot find an opportunity of conversing with her, &c.

## FOURTH DIALOGUE.

*She.* At what age may one begin to love?

*He.* Boys at 14, and girls at 12, according as they are forward for their age, &c.

## FIFTH DIALOGUE.

*She.* How many kinds of happiness are there in love?

*He.* Seven.

*She.* What are they?

*He.* 1. Happy are the lovers who truly love, for he does not feel the joys of love who is but moderately penetrated with it.

2. Happy are the lovers who are strong and hearty, for they are loved the longer and the more highly esteemed.

3. Happy are the lovers who are fond of laughing, for in love there are too frequent occasions for grief, without needing to be ill-humoured besides.

4. Happy are the lovers who have *esprit*, for they enjoy pleasures which the silly do not feel.

5. Happy are the lovers who have patience, for it is very difficult to find a mistress who grants at the first moment what the lover desires.

6. Happy are the lovers who are rich, for love is prodigal of money.

7. Happy are the lovers who have no rivals,

for they have the favour of their mistresses to themselves.

To judge from this specimen of the popular literature, we must confess that the people of Rouen have gradually become Frenchified enough.

Another of these books is called, "Catéchismus des grandes filles pour être mariées, ensemble matière d'attirer les amants." I subjoin an extract from this.

*Question.* What is the sacrament that is most necessary for great girls?

*Answer.* Marriage.

*Q.* At what age ought the handsome to be married?

*A.* In general at 16 or 18.

*Q.* Why at that age?

*A.* For fear a mishap might befall their honour.

*Q.* But at what age ought those who are not handsome to be married?

*A.* The moment a young man asks for them, they ought not to let slip a good opportunity, &c.

In this catechism there is a very pretty litany, which might be recommended to the fair sex in other Catholic countries.

Kyrie, I desire

Christe, to be married.

Kyrie, I pray all the saints

Christe, that it may take place to-morrow.

St. Mary, every body is getting married,

St. Joseph, what have I done?

St. Nicholas, forget me not.

St. Medicis, O that I had a good husband !  
St. Matthias, that he might fear God,  
St. John, that he might love me dearly,  
St. Francis, that he might be true to me,  
St. Andrew, that he might be to my taste,  
St. Didier, that he might be industrious,  
St. Honoré, that he might not be a gambler,  
St. Severin, that he might not be a drunkard,  
St. Clement, that he might be hard-working,  
St. Nicaise, that he might be kind to me,  
St. Jesse, that he might give me a carriage,  
St. Boniface, that my marriage might take place  
St. Augustin, to-morrow morning.

*Prayer.* O Lord, who madest Adam of the dust and gavest Eve to him for a helpmate, send me, if it pleaseth thee, a good husband for my helpmate, not for the sake of sinful lust, but to honour thee, and to have children who may praise thee. Amen.

Indeed, it is difficult to say whether all this is irony, or what else it is intended for. So much is certain that there was a time when the fair damsels of Rouen studied this catechism much more diligently than the Napoleon-Catholic. These books are now nearly out of fashion, but you may soon convince yourself that the females of Rouen have no need of the catechism quoted above, that they are prepared for any examination, and that the precepts inculcated in it have been gradually transfused into the blood. Besides, I have no wish to play into the hands of those who vituperate the pre-



sent age. Robert *le magnifique*, in his time, made mention of a *fons meretricum*, and of his *custos meretricum* in Rouen. The thing then is ancient, and it is only the tract, the catechism, that is an innovation.

At present, it almost seems as if the ladies of Rouen, and indeed the French in general, were becoming more grave. I was at a ball, and observed that scarcely a lady above thirty years old was dancing. I was struck with this circumstance, and in secret bitterly reproached the gentlemen, both young and old. Determined to make a sacrifice and to shame them, I asked a very handsome woman of thirty-two to dance ; but she assured me that she was obliged to decline my invitation, having given up dancing because she was too old. When I expressed my surprise at this to a friend, he coolly replied, "*Nos grandes dames sont des begueules*, as an honest peasant would say." It would be difficult to translate the word, which signifies much the same as : "They would like well enough, but—"

But it is time to close the pleadings, and to sum up. The people in and around Rouen, like most of the Normans, were once extremely devout. Some of them are still so ; at least, they have not lost all faith : in this case, they are superstitious, put confidence in chance and luck, seek counsel from that when their understanding is at fault, possess nevertheless a due share of common sense, heart and feeling, are disposed to mirth, and fond of the

pleasures of the table and the bottle. Time has opened their eyes upon many points, and they are gradually relinquishing what is antiquated, and betaking themselves to the new patriotic almanac. Though the *grandes dames* occasionally act the prude and will not dance, yet the unmarried scarcely need the Catechism of Love, for they know it by heart, and teach and learn the truths which it contains in the *école mutuelle* of their elder sisters and brothers.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

History of Rouen and of Normandy in general—Atrocities of the Frankish Sovereigns—Fredegonde and Brunehilde—Murder of Pretextatus, archbishop of Rouen—The Carlovingians—State of the People at the time of the Invasion of the Normans—Character of the Invaders—Designs of Louis d'Outremer upon Normandy—Influence of the Norman Institutions—Insurrection of the Peasantry—Conquest of England—Influence of that Event on Normandy—Its state under the Successors of William the Conqueror—Normandy becomes a French Province—Rights and Privileges of Rouen confirmed to the City.

IN Havre you need but look at the houses to be convinced that the town has no history, though its historians may do so to prove the very reverse. In Rouen, from the first moment that we begin to thread our way through the narrow streets, a contrary feeling pervades the mind ; and at every step we are detained by a house, a church, a broken stone introduced into the wall of a new building, which remind us of other times, other customs, and other ways of thinking. In the cathedral, we are met by the shades of the Norman dukes and the once powerful archbishops of Rouen ; the Palace of Justice reminds us of the Echiquier of Normandy, and of the Germanic law-institutions in which it

originated ; yon fountain is the monument of the Pucelle, who here received the fire-baptism of her greatness ; and all those houses proclaim the energy and manliness of the citizens of Rouen, and tell how they had the spirit to preserve their independence, even in opposition to their princes.

The history of Rouen, the representative of the Norman bourgeoisie, around which the history of the whole country revolves, is lost in the hoary antiquity of tradition. The name of Rothomagus, which it bore in the time of the Romans, and which no doubt sounded barbarous enough to Roman ears, attests that before they were masters of Gaul it was a place worth naming. Scholars squabble about the origin of this name ; but the Church decided that it was derived from the idol Roth, and sang for above a thousand years, *Extirpato Rotho idolo*, though it is now placed almost beyond doubt that neither god nor idol of the name of Roth ever existed there.

It is not till the time of the Franks that the annals of Rouen become more interesting, as part of the bloody drama in which Brunehilde and Fredegonde were the principal heroines was acted here.

The Roman maritime provinces of Gaul, to which belonged the country afterwards called Normandy, shook off the yoke of Rome at the beginning of the fifth century, and managed till the conclusion of the same century to maintain their freedom and independence under chiefs of their own choice. Clovis at length conquered the country, which, under his



successors, witnessed a series of crimes in the family of its rulers, such as can scarcely be paralleled in the history of any nation or any age. Of these atrocities, Liquet, the historian of Normandy, presents a hideous summary. "The history of this period," he says, "is full of murders and slaughter. If you would see one brother strangle another, a son stab his father, a father murder his son, a husband kill his wife, the conqueror his vanquished foe, and throw him, his wife, and his children, into a well; a king of the Franks (Thierry) invite a king of the Thuringians, (Hermanfroy) to a consultation, and hurl him from the top of his castle; a father order his son to be burned alive; monks attempt to assassinate their bishops in the night; bishops deposed in the assembled council for adultery and murder; women resort sometimes to the dagger, at others to poison, in order to rid themselves of a disgraced husband or a dangerous opponent—if you would see a picture of these and many more crimes, you need but turn over the annals of the Franks from Clovis to Charlemagne. In reading the accounts of these cruelties, enormities, and murders, you fancy that you are wading in blood, and expect at every step to stumble over a corpse."

In the history of Rouen, the character of this period is portrayed to the life. Chilperic, king of Neustria, married Fredegonde, after he had caused his first wife, Galsuinde, to be put to death. Sigebert, his brother, and husband of Brunehilde, Galsuinde's sister, was urged by his wife to revenge the

death of his sister-in-law ; and after he had defeated his brother in battle and driven him from place to place, the latter and his wife could devise no better way of saving and revenging themselves than assassination. Queen Fredegonde summoned two of her pages into her presence, and said to them : " Go to Sigebert ; pretend that ye are come to join him, and watch for an opportunity to kill him. I will load you and your's with honours when you return. Should ye perish, I will distribute abundance of alms for you at the shrines of the saints." This was enough. The poisoned dagger, which the queen delivered to the murderers, pierced Sigebert, just at the moment when he was proclaimed king of Neustria.

Bruneilde, after the death of her husband, was banished to Rouen. Here Chilperic's son saw his aunt, fell in love with her, and they were married by Pretextatus, bishop of Rouen. The revenge of Fredegonde and Chilperic overtook them. Both hastened to Rouen, enticed sister-in-law and son out of the church in which they had taken sanctuary, caused the latter to be put to death, deposed the bishop, and sent him into exile. Seven years afterwards, Chilperic was murdered in his turn, and Pretextatus, after the people of Rouen had expelled Melance, his successor, was reinstated in his dignity. Fredegonde now came to Rouen, to pass her widowhood there. Her revenge was not appeased. Pretextatus was stabbed at the altar by assassins, while not one of the assembled priests had the

courage to hasten to his assistance, and thus to excite the displeasure of the king's widow. One citizen of Rouen only durst accuse her and call her to account : a poisoned bowl was his reward. She had the audacity to visit the dying bishop, to see whether the wound was mortal, and he said to her : " Who could have committed this crime but one who has murdered kings, and so often spilt innocent blood ! I shall die, and thou, the author of the crime, shalt be cursed from age to age, and my blood shall be upon thy head." His prediction was fulfilled.

These events in Rouen characterize the whole epoch of the foundation of the Frankish dominion in Gaul. When one surveys all these crimes and cruelties renewed from day to day, and propagated from generation to generation, one asks in astonishment what can be the moral cause of them, and the answer generally is, that they were owing to the rudeness of the people, ignorance, and the want of civilization. But this answer is in contradiction to history. A few centuries earlier, such deeds among the Germans, who then were assuredly less polished, less civilized, and among the Franks in particular, would have excited the abhorrence of the whole nation ; for, at the time when such events were occurring in France, nothing of the kind was taking place among the Germans living in Germany. A few centuries afterwards, we see similar phenomena recurring in Italy, and at a still later period in Russia, where great advances had already been



made in civilization : but in all these countries such phenomena appeared at a moment when the internal circumstances of the State were nearly the same.

The ancient Germans recognized only the general interest, to which all private interests were subordinate. The individual was lost in the mass. In war alone they acknowledged the supremacy of one man. Incessant hostilities accustomed them more and more to this acknowledgment, and thus we soon see sovereign families arising. They were virtually kings, but the idea of royalty had not penetrated into the mass of the people any more than into those sovereign families themselves ; and thus people and kings considered the interests of sovereigns as mere family interests, their wars as mere family quarrels, in which the people took part in general from habit alone, or from a love of war, or for the sake of booty. Quarrels between the ruling families were in the regular course of things confined to those families, and the importance of the interests at stake accounts in some measure for the atrocity of the means employed in defence of them, because they led more speedily and more surely to the proposed end.

On the overthrow of the republics in Italy, this phenomenon recurs between the families claiming the sovereignty ; and in the North our forefathers witnessed the like spectacle, because the people there were not yet penetrated with the idea of royalty. As soon as this idea had taken firm hold of the people and the rulers, those crimes disap-



peared, or at least became exceptions; and we see subsequently another epoch, the reverse of the former, in which sovereigns, great as well as small, laid waste countries and towns, whenever they had a dispute to settle. And, horrible as was the time in which we meet with the bloody spectres of a Brunehilde and a Fredegonde, the historical inquirer, while perusing the events of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, might be tempted to wish it back again, at least on this particular account.

How little the idea of royalty had at that time taken root among the people is shown by the deposition of the Merovingians and the elevation of the Carolingian line. A family had found means so to augment its power and consequence as soon to be able to counterpoise the ruling family. The preponderance once gained, the weaker of the two was obliged to yield to the stronger. But Charlemagne was the first that laid the foundation-stone of royalty in France and Germany. This, however, could not be done but at the expense of the Germanic principle. Among the Germans, the entire state reposed upon the popular courts, which were the only legislative, judicial, and executive authority. Charlemagne's wars and the tricks of his courts turned this right into an oppressive burden for the people; and thus he was soon enabled to undermine this basis of the Germanic institutions, and to deliver up the courts to judges appointed by the king. The shade of Rome conquered the greatest hero of Germany, and was

destined thenceforward to hold Germany itself in subjection. The people and their constitution were lifted from their hinges, and had no intrinsic support till the fundamental idea of Charles had gained a footing. Hence the moral weakness, after his death, of the once mighty kingdom of the Franks; hence the indolence and degeneracy of those same Franks, who had so recently subdued the bravest of the brave Germans—the Saxons. The innovations of Charlemagne were a positive revolution; and their necessary consequence was that, under the new order of things, every one sought a place for himself, in which he could acquire other rights instead of those which he had lost. Hence the selfishness of the great, and their vices, and their crimes; hence, too, the indifference of the people to all that happened; hence, finally, their moral torpor, which opened to the Normans the way into the heart of France.

It is not requisite to state how this change operated; a descendant of Charlemagne's, Charles the Bald, dispenses me from that task. He described the state of the country in the following terms, at a council held at Pitres (Pistis), five leagues from Rouen: "Foreigners consume our country before our faces; the devastations of the enemy turn it into a desert; the inhabitants are slaughtered and dispersed; the churches and towns are converted into ruins; the bodies of our holy intercessors are torn from their graves; the servants of the Lord are driven from their asylums, . . . . .

because we have opened our hearts to the devil; because we have rent from our souls the blossoms and fruits of faith, hope, charity, and all the other virtues; because we have slain ourselves with the sword of sin; because we glow in the fire of avarice, rapacity, envy, adultery, and other crimes, *non solum per naturalem sexum, sed etiam per sexum qui est contra naturam*; because we do not withstand the attacks of the Evil One; because we sell justice, and it is not to be obtained but by means of presents."

It may be assumed with tolerable certainty that the clergy had prompted this speech of Charles the Bald's; but, mystical as it is, still it is clear enough to portray the state of the country. What he says in regard to justice only tends to confirm the views expressed above.

The more the seed deposited in the ground by Charlemagne developed itself, the more plainly it showed the nature of the fruit that it would produce. "Royalty, sunk into contempt"—one might rather say, not having yet been transfused into the constitution of the people—"was but a title without power in the hand of a man without mind. Under Charles the Simple, who was on the point of creating a duke of Normandy, the great could without difficulty render an authority, which had previously been personal and temporary, hereditary in their families. The lords of the second class joined without obstruction the banner of the leader whom they preferred to the others. Hence that multitude of despots, who treat as their equal him who should



be their sovereign, and whose kingdom at the end of the tenth century might be said to be confined to the town of Laon. Hence that ambition, that disorder, that hatred, and those intestine wars; those acts of violence, the only medium of compassing objects; and all those crimes which were sure of impunity. In vain did twelve prelates, and among them the bishop of Rouen, strive to remedy these evils. Their attempt had no other result than to furnish striking evidence of the incorrigibility of the clergy, and the weakness of the king. 'We are bishops,' said they, 'but we by no means perform our duties as such. We neglect our vocation as preachers. The flocks committed to our care forsake God; they do what is wrong before our faces, and we say nothing. If a reproof displeasing to these rude minds escapes us, they turn against us the words applied by our Lord to the Pharisees, and say, 'They bind oppressive burdens on the shoulders of men, but will not stir a finger to remove them.' The church of God is going to ruin through our silence. Where are the sinners whom we have converted?''\*

Charlemagne had politically annihilated the people. The above-quoted voices of the times describe the state of the nobles and the clergy. At this moment, the Normans made their appearance, and the country fell a prey to them because there was no longer a people to oppose their invasions. Without taking this state of the country into consideration, it is absolutely impossible to conceive how a few thousand

\* Liqueur I. 64.—Concil Frool. ap. Lalbe et Cossart, t. ix. col. 523.



northern pirates could traverse unmolested and lay waste the kingdom of the Franks; for though the former were very brave, still the Franks had shown often enough that in this respect they were not inferior to any nation, that they had no need to fear the Moors, the terror of the South, any more than the Saxons, who were the scourge of the North.

It is not my intention to recapitulate the events of the wars of the Normans with the Franks. The reader may find them in every historian, and there see how separate parties first arrived, plundered on their own movement, and returned home with their booty: how that booty enticed fresh invaders, till at length, Rollo, a Norwegian, with a force composed chiefly of Danes, landed in Normandy, and soon forced the king of France to conclude a peace (that of Claire d'Epte, in 912) by which Normandy was ceded to him by France as an independent duchy, on condition of his embracing the Christian religion. Whether, or in what form, Rollo did homage to the king of France, is a disputed point with historical inquirers; and the majority regard the accounts given in the chronicles to which I have alluded in another place as mere fables. At any rate, this is one of those fables which describe the acting persons, and which, even if invented by the people, are of great interest to the historical student, who wishes to appreciate a given period of time. For the rest, all these particular circumstances are of less consequence in themselves than as effects of the immigration of the Normans into France upon the institutions of the country and the state of the

people. I subjoin a few words concerning the civilisation of the Normans at the period of their arrival in France.

All the chronicles of the time, with rare exceptions, speak of the Normans as rude, savage, pugnacious, bloodthirsty barbarians. These invaders had no historians, for their business was fighting, and so they left their enemies to describe them. Much must be charged to this account. But, no doubt, they really were terrible in war. For many centuries after them, the law of the conqueror was invariably written with blood. But, on closer examination, it appears that, in regard to civilisation at least, the Normans were not behind the mass of those whom they subdued, and that, in regard to morality, manliness, and a sense of justice and duty, they were far before them. The ancient popular songs and traditions of the Normans need not shrink from a comparison with any thing that the bastard literature of the half Romanised French has produced. We see, moreover, from these stories themselves, that poetry, esteemed by the great, was cultivated by the whole nation; that women were more highly respected than in any other country; that the Scalds were held in repute; and, lastly, that baths were as common among the Normans as among the people of Rome and Asia; that abundance and luxury prevailed at their feasts; that they understood the art of decorating their ships and their weapons, without being on that account the less daring and valiant. All these circumstances bespeak an advance in civilisation, which one would

not expect to find among a people of whom the chronicles never speak but as of wild beasts and the pestilence.

But what tells far more than all this, is the state of things that very soon followed the conclusion of the peace in Normandy. Rollo did not sheath his sword — it became the sword of justice. On this point there is a popular story, to which I have already adverted, that of the bracelet in the wood of Roumare, which speaks more plainly than the testimony of contemporary writers. These writers, besides, agree that, immediately after the peace, Rollo and his Normans gave themselves laws, which protected person and property, and that they knew how to maintain them in all their force. The Normans themselves rebuilt the towns which they previously thought it behoved them to destroy; and the husbandman at his plough, the citizen in his workshop, could fearlessly follow their respective occupations.

If, finally, we compare the state of France in the centuries immediately succeeding the Conquest with that of Normandy, the result is still more important; for while chaos reigned supreme in the former, in Normandy, law, justice, civilisation, lifted their heads so high that the Normans very soon became the arbiters of the destiny of France, and had strength left besides to show in Italy, in Greece, and in England, how far they surpassed other nations in polish and valour; till at length they gave, by means of their *trouvères* and of chivalry, a new direction to literature as well as to the military art.



The history of Rouen furnishes a proof that the people very soon began to find themselves gainers by the invasion of the Normans. Scarcely thirty years after the peace of Claire d'Epte (in 943), after Rollo's son, William Longsword, had been murdered by Arnold, duke of Flanders, Louis d'Outremer, king of France, repaired to Rouen, and took under his care Richard, the son of William, who was yet a minor. The people, regarding this proceeding as a stratagem of the king's to secure the person of the young duke, and to keep him prisoner, assembled in the streets, and rose in a mass in behalf of their prince. The insurrection assumed every moment a more threatening aspect. The armed multitude at length prepared to attack the house where the king resided, and to set the duke at liberty by force. The king was obliged to take the boy in his arms, to show him to the concourse of people, and to assure them that it was far from his intention to do any harm to the duke, that he only wished to keep him near himself, that he might give him such an education as would render him worthy to rule the Normans. The great majority of those men had witnessed, as boys, the invasion of the Normans, or had heard at least, when young, the stories told by their fathers concerning them. And it was these who stood up for their Norman duke. The people consisted chiefly of descendants from the Gauls and Franks, and they threatened the descendant of the kings who had reigned over their forefathers. The conduct of the Normans, and the innovations intro-



duced by them, must, to judge from this single circumstance, have been of such a nature as to make the people forget their history, their descent, and their former sympathies; and this is the strongest evidence that can be adduced in favour of the conquerors.

Louis d'Outremer had merely yielded to the vehemence of the people; he had no notion of missing such an opportunity of re-uniting Normandy with his dominions. He soon forgot his promise, entered Normandy with an army, and partially enforced a momentary submission. A Danish auxiliary force, and the escape of Richard from his captivity, deranged his plans. He was obliged to retire before the new comers. Here we again see the people of Rouen actively bestirring themselves, and taking prisoner the king of France (944) when he entered their city on his retreat; which seems to prove that the first insurrection was more than a mere passing excitement. This is rendered still more evident, when we read in the historical works of the times that, at the entry of Richard into Rouen, the people thronged in such multitudes to meet him, that the clergy, when they had reached the extremity of the suburb, were prevented by the concourse from approaching the duke. The subsequent siege of Rouen by Louis, Otho, emperor of Germany, and Arnold of Flanders, did not last long enough to put the attachment of the people to a decisive test, and merely afforded occasion to the Normans, when the besiegers were withdrawing overnight, to display

their valour ; for they attacked and killed a great number of them at a place called Rougemare, from the blood spilt there on that day, and then pursued them as far as the territory of Amiens.

The effects of the laws and institutions of the Normans always manifested themselves as promoting the interests of the country ; and though many things, especially the increasing demoralisation of the clergy, opposed the development of those effects, yet the state of the country was, in a political respect, invariably ahead of that of all the surrounding provinces. " During the tenth century," says Liquez, " the religious position of Normandy was nearly the same as that of other countries, because it was not without difficulty that the ancient faith succeeded in subduing the new generation ; the political position, on the contrary, was different, because the new generation, possessors through the Conquest, independent by rational instinct, succeeded in quashing the subsisting form of government, and in founding order every where in the place of anarchy."

The operation of the Germanic principle was destined to show itself in a way dangerous to the conquerors, who, like all conquerors, formed an aristocracy. In the towns, the victors and the vanquished became more and more blended by daily intercourse. The citizens participated in their way in the Norman institutions, and both parties soon forgot who was the conqueror and who the conquered. In the country, this fusion took place more slowly. There

the peasantry formed a distinct class, in many respects without law, subject to and dependent on the invader aristocracy. But the influence of that which met the eye of every peasant when he came to the city, the independence of the citizens and their freedom, could not be without effect; and hence it was that the Norman peasants were the first in Europe who claimed the rights of man, while those of all other countries were still the willing serfs of their lords.

A century had not elapsed from the settlement of the northern invaders, before Normandy witnessed the first insurrection of the peasantry. In several counties, the villagers assembled, and resolved to throw off the yoke of their lords, and in future to obey only such laws as they should impose on themselves. Each village chose two deputies, to discuss in a general assembly the proposals of individual villages, and to adopt such resolutions as they should deem right and proper. In this proceeding, the lords discovered manifest high treason; and Raoul, uncle of duke Richard II., was commissioned to chastise the insurgents. He fell upon the assembly, caused several of the deputies to be burned alive, while the others had their hands and feet, their noses and ears, cut off, and their eyes put out, to make them, according to the expression of the historian of that time, "unfit for any thing."

In Germany, similar cruelties, practised after the wars of the peasants, are accounted for on the principle of retaliation for atrocities committed by the



peasants themselves. In Normandy, the nobles have no such excuse ; and, indeed, any where else it would be superfluous, as the lords would most assuredly have acted precisely in the same manner without it. A ravenous beast, which breaks its chain and tears its master in pieces, is caught and chained up again. But a slave, a serf, who merely bursts, or strives to burst, his fetters to become a man — oh ! that is a totally different affair, and demands the interference of the executioner.

Some years afterwards, a similar insurrection took place in Bretagne, which had also been partially conquered by the Normans ; and there, too, a contest ensued between the peasants and the lords, which was decided in favour of the latter. The spirit that called forth these insurrections, however, was not subdued ; and, not long afterwards, we find mention made, in the history of Normandy, of communes of free peasants.

Let people think as they please of revolutions and insurrections of peasants, it must be admitted that they are invariably, more or less, a consequence of the advanced civilisation of the insurgents ; for they are attributable only to the aroused feeling of independence, to the consciousness of rights which men think themselves authorised to claim, and which they have the courage to demand — evidences these of an advance towards intellectual and civil maturity, though the fruit may be precocious.

These insurrections are indirectly of importance for the history of Normandy. In the sources, men-



tion is rarely made of the legislative right of the free Normans ; on the other hand, this insurrection of peasants, in which the serfs claimed that right, attests that it was possessed by the freemen, for we may be pretty sure that the former demanded no more than they saw every day in the possession of others.

It would be wonderful if, in a country where the peasants already began to think and to feel their importance, the other classes too had not endeavoured to open for themselves a more unrestricted career. The insurrection of peasants and principles of reformation were destined to be contemporaneous, and to go hand in hand, as in Germany. And thus we see that, nearly about the same time (since 1000), the Norman clergy sought to prove the dissolubility of marriages from the Bible, that images were destroyed in churches, that the necessity of tithes for salvation was doubted ; that, lastly, the presence of Christ in the host was questioned ; that even bishops broached this question, and so forced Duke Richard II. to threaten them with deposition from their dignity. These things occurred in Normandy five hundred years before Luther ; they prove much more than any reasoning the moral state of the country and the influence of the Germanic principle.

We now arrive at a phenomenon which afforded the most striking evidence of the political energy of the country. The conquest of England by William, the seventh duke of Normandy, scarcely one hundred and fifty years after Rollo landed as a pirate in

France, is not to be accounted for, if even all possible justice is done to the genius of the Conqueror, but by the moral superiority of the Normans over the Anglo-Saxons. If there is any one whom all this does not suffice, let him recollect that, at the moment when Normandy had to complete and to defend this conquest, at a time when a German emperor was obliged to appear barefoot before the pope and beg his absolution, William dared forbid his clergy all correspondence with Rome, curtail their jurisdiction, prohibit excommunication without his previous permission, and at the same time keep the nobility within bounds by the God's peace and the people by the law of *couvre-feu*; and that, in the enforcement of these measures, adopted with the consent of the states, he could always reckon upon the support of the majority of his subjects, while in other countries the lightnings of the church shattered crowns, and the power of the nobles oppressed the people and undermined thrones.

The conquest of England gave the history of Normandy a different direction. The moral and political state of the country had raised its dukes to a consequence wholly disproportionate to the extent of their dominions. All France was immediately under their supremacy; and as soon as Hugh Capet had secured the Duke of Normandy, he saw a way opened for him to the throne of France. The ancient propensity of the Normans to emigration and conquest continued to impel them to seek a field for

their activity out of their own country, the moment there was nothing left for them to do at home. Italy, Sicily, and Greece succumbed to separate bands of Norman knights. The moral energy of the country, this fondness for emigration, adventures, and conquests, would certainly sooner or later have made the Norman dukes kings of France, if such another epoch had supervened as that when Richard I. placed the crown on the head of his friend, Hugh Capet. The conquest of England assigned to them a different field.

On the conquest of England, Normandy became a province of that kingdom. Civil dissensions in England, the divided interests of the nobility, at once Norman and English, the foibles, the vices, and the crimes of the Conqueror's successors, who, like the offspring of all other conquerors, bore the curse of the people who had fallen by the sword of their progenitors, the degeneracy of the nobles through the wealth and the spoil which they had acquired in England, lastly, the endless wars of the barons among themselves under William's descendants, broke the strength of Normandy, and gradually estranged the people from the sovereigns of England. The question whether France should become Norman was reversed, and thenceforward the only point was whether Normandy should become French.

The history of Normandy, from the moment of the conquest of England, exhibits an incessant conflict of the nobles with one another and with their



princes, in which the people were invariably the scapegoat, and had to bear the consequences of this state of things, till it terminated at last in the moral ruin of the nobles themselves, and in the conquest of Normandy by France. There are few epochs that excite such profound disgust in the historical inquirer. The sons of William the Conqueror, weak and unenterprising like those of Charlemagne, quarrelled like them about the spoils of their father, and thus afforded, like them too, the fairest opportunity for annihilating themselves. William II., King of England, strove to wrest the duchy of Normandy from his brother Robert Courteuse. During these dissensions, and more especially through the lawlessness of the nobles, caused and promoted by this state of things, the inhabitants of Rouen saw their rights trampled under foot and their trade destroyed. Still they had no thought of throwing themselves into the arms of a foreigner, and so they merely sought protection of the stronger, the king of England, and with Conan, one of the wealthiest citizens at their head, offered to open the gates of the city to him. They actually admitted a number of the king's troops into the place. But, at the same moment, Robert's barons, to whom the plan of the inhabitants had been betrayed, entered the city by another gate. The streets were transformed into a field of battle. As the princes fought, brother against brother, so did the citizens. Robert, who seems to have had no more heart in his body than brains in his head, fled from the city; but his younger



brother Henry remained, and at length gained with his knights the victory over the citizens, who adhered to the king. The revenge of the duke's partisans was worthy of the times. Henry with his own hand threw Conan out of the window of the ducal palace, so that he was dashed in pieces upon the stones; and Richard gave up the citizens, whose anger he durst not meet, to the mercy of his knights, who carried them off in troops, dreadfully ill used them, and left them to languish and starve in their dungeons if they had not wherewithal to purchase life and liberty. The historian of that time says on this occasion: "Thus we see that proud Normandy, which conceived that she durst do any thing to subjugate, to plunder, and to lay waste England, herself a prey to all sorts of calamities. She has exterminated the rulers of England, and now she tears her own bosom, and makes her own children miserable. She is puffed up with the wealth of England, and now mangles herself for the sake of that wealth; and, like Babylon, she is obliged herself to drink the bitter cup which formerly she forced upon foreign nations."\*

In spite of these contests and cruelties, perhaps precisely in consequence of them, the citizens, especially of the principal towns, contrived to extend their influence more and more. They acquired strength and importance, and we soon find their rights publicly recognised more or less by their rulers. Henry granted, or rather confirmed, the

\* *Odoric. Vital. l. viii.*

right which had long virtually belonged to the communes of several towns, Pont-Audemer, Eu, and others; and at Rouen we see, on occasion of the marriage of Henry to the empress Matilda, a proof that the great were learning to respect the people, as the citizens were then for the first time publicly summoned and invited by heralds to take part in the solemnity.

In the struggle for the crown of Normandy, which took place after the decease of Henry I., the youngest of the Conqueror's sons, between Henry Plantagenet (Henry II.) and his barons, we find the nobility divided, and the people not siding with either party. Rouen opened its gates, without the slightest resistance, to Geoffry Plantagenet.

The profound immorality of the Plantagenets—Henry II., for example, forced the bride of his own son to gratify his lust—could not but estrange the people more and more from their princes. These dispositions could not be any secret to the kings of France, and thus we see the designs of that power upon Normandy again manifesting themselves. In the quarrel of Henry II. with the English clergy, Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, who was the champion of the principles of Gregory VII. in England, fled to France, where he found a willing protector in Louis VII., who expressed himself in favour of the English clergy, and encouraged the intervention of the clergy of France. This was the way to gain the good-will of the representatives of the church in Normandy, and such was actually the

result. Thenceforward the kings of France neglected no means to win them over more and more to their interests. But an occasion soon offered to act with more effect. Dissensions in the family of Henry II., fostered if not excited by the king of France, led to the flight of Prince Henry, the eldest son of the English monarch, to France, and Louis took up arms in his behalf. But the oft-tried loyalty of the Normans was strong enough to withstand this attack, and, though the French army advanced without resistance to Rouen, it was there repulsed with great loss.

The crusade of Richard Cœur de Lion contributed to alienate the people still more from the prince. During Richard's absence, the archbishop of Rouen was regent of the duchy; and it may easily be conceived that the clergy did not neglect so fair an opportunity of extending their prerogatives at the expence of the people. In Rouen itself, these encroachments drove the people to riot, as the priests had turned the churches and their precincts into markets, where they allowed foreign traders to expose their goods for sale, upon paying a certain per-centage—a proceeding which tended to injure the trade of the citizens. The people of Rouen pulled down the walls enclosing the churches, and drove out the dealers patronised by the clergy. But, if the citizens proved the stronger of the two on this occasion, the clergy gave way but for the moment, and awaited other opportunities for enforcing their pretensions.



Normandy had successively felt the pressure of the different estates of the duchy, of the princes, of the nobles, and of the clergy ; and though at times the kings did not act in the interest of the other two estates, still the citizens had less to hope from them, as they were obliged to divide their activity between two countries, and were in general called away from Normandy when their presence was most wanted there. The ranks of the nobles were already thinned by the crusades : the clergy were drawn by the kings of France into their interest, and could not, at any rate, be losers, by exchanging sovereigns, who in some particulars defied the yoke of Rome, for the pious and most christian kings of France.

Thus every thing was prepared for that event which, ever since the conquest of England by William, had been written in the book of Fate ; and Philip Augustus, king of France, was the man destined to fulfil this decree. John, surnamed Lackland, who had but courage enough to be the assassin of a boy, his nephew Arthur, merely accelerated what was before inevitable : for the brave and chivalrous Cœur de Lion himself had not been able to quash the pretensions of Philip Augustus. About three hundred years after the invasion of Neustria by Rollo, and one hundred and fifty after the conquest of England, Normandy again became French, after the reduction of Chateau Gaillard, almost without a struggle. Rouen, Arquets, and Verneuil alone attempted to form a league and to oppose France. But they were too weak to oppose



Fate, and surrendered likewise almost without drawing a sword, when Philip Augustus manifested his willingness to respect and to confirm their rights.

The privileges of the city of Rouen were confirmed three years afterwards, in 1207, at Passy sur Eure, and we see from them what a development commerce and the commune in particular had already attained. In regard to the latter, the people obtained no more than had been granted to them under the dukes of Normandy and the kings of England, as it appears from the articles, in which it is said: "We have given and confirmed to our faithful subjects and citizens of Rouen all their usages and liberties.....We have recognized the right of commune, citizenship, banlieu, and administration of justice, within the limits which king Richard assigned to them, but without prejudice to the rights of the lords who possess landed property in the district of the city."

These rights consisted in the administration of civil justice, and in the cognizance of crimes and misdemeanours up to a certain degree, the exceptions being thus designated, "*pourvu qu'il n'y ait point des morts ou mutilations ou que la cause ne depende pas du Plet de l'épée.*" The Plet de l'épée was the superior criminal jurisdiction. "The mayor shall have the assignations of the people of his jurisdiction, and see them righted, and none shall dare to lay hands upon them, excepting him and his sergeant, unless they have become amenable to the Plet de l'épée; and to this end the mayor is bound

to assist our *bailly*, that he may be able to administer justice in his *baillage*, or jurisdiction." Thus the citizens could not be apprehended but by their own mayor, and it was only through him that the king's *bailly* could execute his decrees.

This act moreover secures to the citizens the right of marrying according to their free choice, relieves them from the duty of paying *fouage*, of guarding the king's prisoners, of paying the *taille ordinaire*, "si non qu'ils l'accordent de bonne volonté," whereby the right of refusing taxes was granted to them. On wine alone they paid a certain duty; on the other hand, the king engaged to pay for the wine which he himself or his people should take, and at the same price at which it was sold to others. According to the same act, the citizens had the right of pasture for their cattle in all the domain forests in Normandy. All goods belonging to the people of Rouen passed free from the king's customs, and they were likewise toll-free upon the Seine. Rouen had moreover a right of staple for all merchandize going up and down the Seine. No ship could go from France to Ireland—excepting one every year from Cherbourg—or come from Ireland to France, without unloading at Rouen; and lastly, strangers could not sell or buy goods in Rouen, but through the medium of a citizen.

The history of Normandy, as an independent state, closes with the conquest of the duchy by Philip Augustus, and with that charter in which he

recognized the privileges of the citizens of Rouen. This act is therefore of great importance, as it clearly proves on what step of freedom and independence the burghers of cities stood at that early period, and marks the moment when Normandy ceased to exist as such. For, thenceforward, though the Norman institutions continued to vegetate for a considerable time, and the English again held temporary sway in Rouen, Normandy was nothing more than a province of France, and it is only as such that its history is of any interest. In my further remarks I shall therefore confine myself to the notice of such points only as serve more or less to illustrate the character of the people.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

History of Normandy continued—Invasion of France by Edward III.—Atrocious Treachery of John king of France—Respect paid to popular Opinion by the king of Navarre—Dawning Importance of the Tiers-Etat—King of Rouen—State of France on the Invasion of Henry V.—Spirit of the People of Rouen—Siege and Surrender of the City to the English—Execution of Joan of Arc—Jacques Cœur—Dissensions between the Catholics and the Protestants—Massacre of St. Bartholomew—Conflicts of the League—Effects of the Government of Henry IV.—Assembly of the States General under Louis XIII.—Richelieu—Spirited Conduct of the Parliament of Normandy under Louis XV.—Louis XVI.—The Revolution.

PHILIP LE BEL, son of Philip Augustus, seized the possessions of the count of Artois, who fled to England. D'Harcourt, a Norman knight, accompanied him, and the latter soon contrived to persuade king Edward III. that the best thing he could do would be to invade France, in order to recover Normandy. But the Normans were so entirely reconciled to the authority of France, that (in 1340) they offered their then duke John, son of the king of France, 4000 horse and 20,000 foot-soldiers to oppose the English.

The heroic exploits of the English, and the chi-



valorous spirit of king Edward and his son, the Black Prince, are well known. It is an interesting fact that, at the battle of Crecy (1346), the cannon of the English produced the same effect upon the French as did those of the first conquerors of America on the savages.

During the first half of this contest, Normandy was spared, but a murder was destined to kindle afresh the flames of this war, which had originated in a robbery, and they afterwards extended to Normandy, which had witnessed that murder.

John I., after he ascended the throne, granted the dukedom of Normandy to his son Charles. This prince invited the *grandees* of the duchy to an entertainment, which he gave on his arrival at Rouen. Among them were Charles king of Navarre, John and William d'Harcourt, and several other nobles, who were reputed to belong to the English party. Just at the moment when the attendants were setting the dishes on the table for the entertainment, king John himself arrived in Rouen, ordered those persons to be seized, sat down coolly to the repast provided for them, and then ordered four of them, among whom was John, the son of Geoffry d'Harcourt, who had induced king Edward to invade France, and commanded a division of his army, to be beheaded. From the window of the dining-room the king watched the executioners performing their office.

This atrocity excited the strongest abhorrence throughout Normandy ; and the people everywhere

rose as soon as it became known. Geoffry d'Harcourt hastened back to England, and his paternal feelings inspired him with sufficient eloquence to draw a fearful retaliation on the king, and unfortunately on the people too, of France. A fresh army of English landed, and in the battle of Poitiers (September 19th, 1356), 8000 of them defeated 60,000 French, and took king John himself prisoner.

The hatred subsisting between Charles le Mauvais, king of Navarre, and the king of France, prevented the latter from opposing the English with a requisite force, and affords us occasion to remark a circumstance, which was till then without parallel in modern history, and showed that a total change of things was nearer at hand than any one, and least of all the principal persons of the drama, suspected. Charles, king of Navarre, was the enemy of the king of France. A century earlier, a battle or a single combat would have decided the quarrel, and the royal adversaries would at most have issued a summons to their brave knights, while the people would only have had to bear the expence, and to endure the ill usage of the armies on their passage. But those times were past. Charles le Mauvais, king of Navarre, as I have said, had a stage erected in Paris, from which to harangue the populace, and forced the dauphin Charles, (afterwards Charles V.) to descend from the steps of the throne, and to address the people in the market-place.

Any comment would be superfluous ; the fact

speaks plainly enough for itself, and shows that the time was come when even sovereigns felt, or began to have an inkling, that some use might be made of the people, that there was another estate worth thinking of besides the nobles and the clergy. If it is not till long afterwards that we see the *tiers-état* attaining political influence, if it is not till five centuries later that it feels its full strength and makes its enemies feel it too, this is but the same kind of phenomenon that we find on every page of history, which shows the matured but unacknowledged energies of a new age, slumbering as if spell-bound for centuries, till a man arises who knows the formula that breaks the spell, and says to the young giant: "Rouse thee, and go thy way!"

Normandy witnessed the struggle between the two royal parties, till the valiant Duguesclin, to whose army the people of Rouen alone lent 10,000 men, forced the king of Navarre to be quiet. But he could only wrest the sword from his hand, not extract the poison which coursed in the veins of Charles V. of France, and which the king of Navarre had administered to him.

The minority of Charles VI. was a new misfortune for France, for it subjected the country to the authority of plunderers, intent only on enriching themselves, regardless of the welfare of the people, or the emancipation of the kingdom from a foreign yoke. The *intrigues* of the great—*battles* between them had become far less frequent—had meanwhile free scope. We here meet with another phenome-



non, which proves even still more strongly than the speeches of Charles le Mauvais to the people that a new era was preparing. In most of the principal cities, with Paris at their head, the citizens rose against the new imposts of the government, and in Rouen we even find them electing a king from their midst. But this citizen-king no doubt felt that he was unequal to the weight of a crown, and therefore seized the first opportunity to flee from his kingdom. Thus this event was perpetuated only as a sign of the times in the annals of Normandy.

Confusion worse confounded reigned throughout all France, when Charles VI. became a lunatic; and troops of Armagnes and Bourgognes, as the partisans of the duke of Orleans and the duke of Burgundy called themselves, roved through and laid waste the country. At this moment, the English landed in Normandy under Henry V., and defeated the French in the memorable battle of Agincourt (October 24th, 1415). The king of France and his son repaired to Rouen, to take measures there for the defence of the country. But the French troops themselves, which, according to the custom of that time, when the nobles were no longer sufficient, and the sons of the people served as hired soldiers, dispersed after the battle of Agincourt, plundering friend and foe, and drove the citizens of Rouen into insurrection, so that the king was obliged to adopt more energetic measures in regard to these soldiers of his own and of his adherents.



In the history of France there has scarcely been a moment in which the country was in a more deplorable state. Its utter ruin appeared inevitable. A king without either moral or material power; a nobility, showing no signs of life but in intrigues and by hired soldiers; an army which served only while it was paid, and served any one who would pay it; lastly, a people which had not yet arrived at the consciousness of its own strength, and merely stretched its mighty limbs from time to time, in the obscure feeling of that strength—such were the foundations on which the State reposed. Intestine war was the consequence of this situation, and a victorious enemy came, as it appeared, to give the finishing stroke, to erase the name of France from the book of history, and to inscribe that of England in its stead. In France itself there was only heard now and then, in the riots of the citizens, a voice complaining of this state of things; but the princes and the great hoped by means of it to regain what they had lost in the course of time. Only one prince of Europe took to heart the condition of France; this was Sigismund, emperor of Germany; but his voice was lost amid the chaos which reigned in the unhappy country.

Meanwhile, the operations of the English could not fail to be successful. On the 30th of July, 1418, after they had reduced the greater part of Normandy, they appeared before Rouen. On this occasion, the citizens gave a splendid proof of their attachment to their new country, but also of their

energy and independent spirit, in regard to both friend and foe. The siege, though the citizens were left almost entirely to their own exertions, lasted six months. During this interval, they sent a deputation to Paris, and the king heard from the lips of men belonging to the people a language which again announced the new era. "Most excellent monarch," said the envoy, "the inhabitants of Rouen, which belongs to you, have charged me to cry the great *Harro* against you, and against the lords of Bourgogne, who have the government of the king, on account of the oppression which they have to endure from the English; and they tell you through me that if, owing to the want of succour from you, they become subjects of England, you will have no worse enemies in the world than they, and if they can, they will annihilate you and your race."\* Only a century earlier, such language would have been impossible and ridiculous, and would at most have drawn down punishment on the bold speaker and his constituents.

The king of France had it not in his power to send any succour whatever to the citizens of Rouen; they were therefore obliged to defend themselves. The Chronicles tell of 30,000 men of Rouen, who are said to have fallen in the defence of the city. Nothing but famine could at length compel them to think of surrender. When reduced to the last extremity, they resolved to set fire to the four corners

\* Gaube, Hist. du Duché de Norm. ii. 166.

of the city, and to fight their way through the English, or to die honourably. But they were spared this alternative; for the English offered them so favourable a capitulation, that the majority of the citizens accounted it no disgrace to accept the terms. In this capitulation the English recognised the privileges of the city, and only demanded a contribution of 345,000 gold crowns, and the delivery of three defenders of the city, Robert Livet, vicar-general; Jean Jourdan, captain of the artillery; and Alloie Blanchard, captain of the citizens; and with this condition the people of Rouen complied, in the hope that they should be able to ransom them. The two former did actually ransom themselves; but Blanchard replied, "I have no property, and if I had I would not employ it to prevent an Englishman from dishonouring himself." And the English did dishonour themselves, for their brave adversary was executed.

Rouen continued for thirty years under the dominion of England. Its citizens witnessed the cruel execution of Joan of Arc, and witnessed it with the utmost indignation. Not long afterwards, all Normandy was in revolt; and when the troops of the French approached the city, the inhabitants of Rouen rose too, and fought hand to hand in the streets against the murderers of the Maid of Orleans, delivered the keys of the place to the French, and assisted to besiege Talbot in the castle of Rouen, till he was forced to surrender.

We have had frequent occasion to remark the



progress of the spirit of independence among the citizens. The whole military system had gradually changed. Henceforward the battles of the country were fought by the sons of the people. But in France a single name, that of a Jacques Cœur, serves to designate the new conformation of things. I have no need to insist on the importance of this name. The history of Jacques Cœur is universally known.

When Charles VII. resorted to a radical preventive against the attempts at poisoning which he apprehended, that is to say, starved himself to death, Louis XI. had but to put a finishing hand to the work. With the aid of the people, he annihilated the last relic of the political influence of the noblesse, and thus cleared for his successor, Louis XII., a way along which he could proceed in order to gain the appellation of *Père du Peuple*. A friend of his, cardinal d'Ambois, archbishop of Rouen, was his vicegerent in Normandy, where he proved a benefactor of the people.

The religious dissensions between the Protestants and the Catholics, to which we are approaching, gave a different direction to the course of events. The noblesse conceived that it had found in them the means of recovering its ancient rights; the people the means of extending their's: but both were disappointed by the denouement of the sanguinary drama, for in France it merely led to the victory of the royal power over both. Normandy was the principal theatre of these conflicts, as the



majority of the people very soon embraced the new doctrine. Coligny, throwing himself at the feet of Francis II., strove to obtain liberty of conscience for the Normans; but it required other means to gain this point: accordingly, under Charles IX., the professors of the new faith rose in Normandy, and had soon the ascendancy in most of the towns. The parliament was obliged to retire to Louviers, that it might not be forced to obey the Protestants in Rouen. The city was then besieged, at first in vain, by the duke d'Aumale, and at length reduced by king Charles IX. The scaffold was the argument employed against the new doctrine, both in the capital of Normandy and in the whole country.

It is not consistent with my plan to detail the struggles of the two parties in Normandy; suffice it merely to remark that, in many places in Normandy, at least, the Catholics themselves held back the sword of vengeance, after a Catherine de Medicis had waved the torch of the Furies in the night of St. Bartholomew; that a cardinal Bourbon, archbishop of Rouen, a bishop Hennuyer at Lisieux, a governor Sigagne at Dieppe, paid higher respect to their God than to the command of a bloodthirsty debauchee, whose watchword was "Messe, mort, ou bastille," and of a vindictive queen, who, when the constable de Montmorency was taken prisoner, exclaimed, "Eh bien, il faudra donc prier Dieu en français!" and who was therefore not even impelled by religious zeal to this atrocity. In spite of the efforts of many Catholic ecclesiastics and

civil officers, there fell in the eight *baillages* of Normandy (Rouen, Caen, Alençon, Evreux, Bayeux, Scez, Coutances, Avranches), in the days of terror succeeding the night of St. Bartholomew, according to authentic documents, not fewer than 141,560 victims, by the dagger, or by the sword of justice, which the government had put into the hands of murderers.

But even these atrocious means were not capable of extirpating an idea. A few years sufficed to restore such power to the Protestants, that they were able to force Henry III. to recognise them, to give up to them eight fortified towns in the province, and to grant them seat and vote in each parliament. But after the death of Henry III., they were strong enough to clear the way to the throne for a Protestant prince, in spite of the League, in spite of all the priests and grandees of France, and in spite of the pope and the king of Spain.

The conflicts of the League again furnish occasions enough for remarking the new conformation of things. The League itself recognised the recently-acquired power of the people, for it united with the citizens, declared itself the champion of their rights, insisted on the abolition of the abuses of power, and demanded justice for all. In Paris we even see, after the death of Henry III., the leaders of the citizens consulting whether they should proclaim a republic, and invite all the other great towns of France to form a league of free cities, after the example of the Swiss confederation.

The proclamations of the League, drawn up in the spirit of the citizens, gained it adherents every where. Nearly the whole of Normandy, though containing so many Protestants, declared in its favour. This circumstance accounts for the obstinate resistance which Henry IV. met with in Normandy, and at Rouen in particular.

Henry's desertion of the Protestant for the Catholic faith, but still more his conduct towards the citizens of the towns which he took, led him at length to the throne. He was the last king of France who comprehended that the times had changed, and that the people had acquired an independent power. In 1596 he thus addressed the states assembled at Rouen : " I have not called you together, by any means, as my predecessors did, to make known to you my will. I have assembled you to hear your counsels, to believe in them, and to follow them, in short, to place myself under your guardianship—a wish seldom formed by kings, gray-beards, and conquerors."

Perhaps he knew not himself that, in thus speaking in accordance with the spirit of the time, he had yielded to necessity, that he had spoken as his good genius prompted ; for, when his Gabrielle expressed her surprise at this guardianship, he replied, "*Ventre-saint-gris, je l'entends avec mon épée à côté.*" The words addressed to the parliament have become the property of history and of the French people ; those uttered in the boudoir of his mistress died away upon its walls.



All France, and Normandy in particular, felt the beneficial effects of the government of a king who, at least, did not act contrary to the spirit of his time. His death was the culminating point in the history of the French people, and thenceforward we proceed with giant strides to the French revolution. None of the successors of Henry IV., who, down to Louis XVI., were all boys when they ascended the throne, had any notion how, through what causes, and by whom, the nobles were driven from the political theatre; none of them ever appeared to suspect that the gradual attainment of majority by the people had alone given kings the power to reduce the nobles and the clergy to political ciphers. The nobles had even demeaned themselves so far as to perform the services of courtiers, ready to comply with every wish of the king or of his courtiers. The kings could not find more devoted lacqueys, and therefore relinquished the people and the government to the great, who regarded intrigue as the only way of regaining their former political power.

The *tiers-état* alone had clear views in these gloomy times, and even strove to act the part of protector of the royal power. In the states-general, which Louis XIII. summoned together (October 27th, 1614), it requested the king, in order to check a reprobate doctrine which had been spreading for some time past, and threatening the independence of the sovereign in regard to his temporalities, to permit a fundamental law to be enacted in the assembly of the states-general to this effect—that,



since the king was recognised as sovereign of France, and derived his power from God alone, there was not on earth either an ecclesiastical or a temporal power which had a right to deprive him of his kingdom, or to release or dispense his subjects from the fealty and attachment which they owed him on any ground whatever. But the voice of the representatives of the people had no more effect than a voice in the wilderness; the king understood it not, and those who did understand it, the nobles and the clergy, opposed the adoption of the proposed article, and took care that, during the reign of Louis XIV., the notables only, and not the states-general, should be called together.

The nobility and the clergy, no longer the energetic representatives of a want of the time and of circumstances, but the mere panders to the passions and whims of a boy, a woman, a favourite, soon ruled alone, and obtained without much difficulty the repeal of the edicts which declared the citizens to be relieved from the *taille*, and even found means to deprive the ennobled citizens of their patents.

The intrigues of a duke de Longueville very soon produced disturbances and insurrections in Normandy, without, however, giving a different turn to the course of events.

Lastly, Richelieu was the very incarnation of that spirit of the rulers of France, of the nobility, and of the clergy. With what eyes the people of Normandy regarded this rule is proved by an insurrection in Rouen, when the people forcibly opposed



liament under Louis XV. with the courtiers and favourites was only a type of the conflict of the constituent and legislative assemblies in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The *gens de la robe* were the last advocates of the *tiers-état* and the people, and the creatures of the chancellor Maupéou strove to silence them also.

Normandy distinguished itself in this contest. In an *arrêt* of the 15th of April, 1771, the parliament of Rouen declared the favoured servants of the court to be "intrus parjures et violateurs de leurs serments;" and the manifesto of the 18th of November, 1772, addressed to the Normans, after the parliament of Normandy was dissolved, even went so far as to threaten the separation of Normandy from France, if the ancient rights of the country should continue to be trampled under foot as they then were. It appealed to the compact of 1204, by which Normandy was united with France, and by which it was mutually agreed that, if either party neglected to fulfil it, the other was released from the engagement, contending that the province was thereby replaced in its former state, and consequently given back to England, or at liberty to seek another sovereign for itself.

The document in question then proceeds thus: "Besides this contract of incorporation, the Normans have to demand the famous codex, *la charte aux Normands*. This consists of three principal articles. According to the first, the *Coûtumes* of the country and its usages must not be altered upon any pretext or at



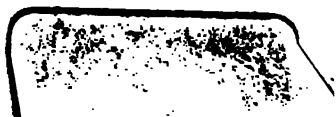


1772), but its language was different, for it was assumed in this *lettre* that the king was held in subjection by his favourites, and it therefore prayed that he would emancipate himself.

Louis XVI. strove to repair the mischief done by his predecessors. It is well known how he was again checked in these efforts by the court and the favourites, how they pulled down as fast as he built up, how they got into his way whenever he would have advanced a step, and how at last, misled by them, he leagued himself with the foreign foe for the purpose of annihilating all that the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies had done, and that he had sworn to uphold, and how all this brought him to the scaffold.

For four or five centuries, what was destined to happen had been in preparation. The nearer we approach to the epoch of the Revolution, the more plainly we perceive the signs and tokens of coming events. In all the great epochs of history we see the future preparing in this manner for centuries, till at length the man arises who knows how to solve the riddle, sums up, and decides the whole controversy. For the revolution of 1789 Sieyes was that man, for he said, "What is the *tiers-état*, the bourgeoisie? Nothing.—What ought it to be? Every thing." And the Genius of History said Amen! and it was so.

The Revolution closed the last epoch of the history of France to commence a new one. It erased the names of the provinces, and that of Normandy among the rest.



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**Abstract**

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